

HOW TO SELL PRINTING

—

H. M. BASFORD



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HOW TO SELL PRINTING

BY
HARRY M. BASFORD



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CHAPTER ONE

Selling Printing at a Profit

SELLING printing at a profit is presumably the object of those who engage in the printing business, but an investigation of the conditions under which printing is sold in almost every city and state in the country would lead the observer to believe that the profit is of small consideration with many printers, who ply their vocation from year to year with net results of a bare living in many cases and of bankruptcy and impaired credit in others.

Advertising and selling are very nearly synonymous in marketing the product of the printing press, but as my book on "How to Advertise Printing" deals more particularly with printed publicity and other strictly advertising methods for inducing sales, this volume on "How to Sell Printing" will deal more particularly with office methods and selling by means of salesmen, correspondence, coöperative organizations, etc., which, while they may be termed advertising in a sense, are of a more personal nature and are intended to be suggestive and helpful to every master printer, manager, proprietor, or representative of a printing house, who deals either personally or through the mail with the buying public, in making sales of printing.

It is generally conceded in the trade that a good

2 *Two Extremes of Printing Salesmanship*

printing salesman is a most valuable man. Indeed, the really competent salesman who can continue to sell printing day after day on a profitable basis is about as scarce as the paper salesman, and it is a well-known fact that good paper salesmen are extremely hard to find.

The two extremes of printing salesmanship are perhaps represented, at the top, by the active manager or principal salesman of the large printing house who handles big orders for the railroads, corporations, etc., and the printing broker who is coming to take an important place in the commercial life of every large city; at the bottom stands, or perhaps drags his way along, the man who devotes a part or all of his time to soliciting printing on a basis of ten per cent of the amount of the orders he secures. Based on the results and the net value of their services, the man who has reached the higher altitudes of his profession is the poorer paid of the two. I know a number of salesmen in this class who would have become independent within a few years if they had received ten per cent of the total sales of printing which they had brought to the houses they represented. The inefficient and incompetent representative who is paid ten per cent commission on the orders he secures is usually overpaid, because much of the business he secures is often undesirable rather than profitable. He deals with small business houses who buy infrequently and in small quantities, and this kind of

salesman is always trying to secure a lower price for his customers than that quoted by the concern which he is supposed to represent. I have seen these commission men come into the office of a plant and talk for a reduction in price as though they were the customers, and their stock excuse for not getting business always is that the prices of the establishment which they represent are too high to meet competition.

The correct basis of compensation for a printing salesman would seem to be the profits on the work he secures, rather than the amount of the orders. The salesman might not fare so well under such an arrangement ; he probably would not ; but the employer would be the gainer.

It will be my object to suggest various ways of dealing with the public to secure their printing orders, and to outline some methods which have proved successful in carrying out the various branches of office work connected with the selling of printing through solicitation of salesmen or through the mails.

My experience, covering almost every phase of dealing with the public in large shops and small, in large cities and small towns, and my observation of the methods in use in many plants, lead me to believe that there are many practices and customs in the printing trade which are actually detrimental to making sales. Customers are frequently handled in a manner which does not result in orders, and some of the really successful

methods of handling prospects and buyers are little known and not generally used by representatives of the printing trade.

In what other line of trade is the seller diffident about asking a price for his goods that will pay him a substantial profit? Yet this is exactly the condition that exists in the printing trade in almost every city and town throughout the country. The printers quote low prices because they are afraid that customers will take their orders elsewhere. Having been a buyer as well as a seller of printing, I have at times been interested in getting customers' ideas of the business ability of the printers whom they patronize. I recently was talking with the buyer for an automobile supply house who purchases large quantities of printing every month. We met in a printing office and I remarked, "This firm ought to be making money, as they seem very busy lately." "They ought to be, but they are not," replied my friend, "because they do work too cheap. They are afraid the other fellow will get the job, so they cut the price, selling linotype composition for \$1.25 per hour, and don't know what work costs them because they do not keep their cost records accurately enough."

This seems to me a queer arraignment of a printing house by one of its principal customers. There must be something wrong with the selling methods of the printing business when such assertions can be truly

made about a printing concern that employs a number of people and that presents every aspect of a busy, prosperous plant.

I have often contended that the selling of printing was something vastly different from the sale of sugar or other staple commodities which are kept in a barrel or on the shelf, to be reached for and measured out at a fixed price when asked for. To sell printing profitably and well calls for the highest type of salesmanship, and the person who can do this should be looked up to as an example of supremacy in that branch of printing upon which all the other departments depend. The salesman should never lose sight of the elusive profit, however, in his ambition to secure an order; for the unprofitable order is a drawback and detriment to a plant in many ways, aside from the missing profit. It takes up the time of men who might otherwise be employed on profitable work; it helps to acquire an undesirable reputation for too low prices by leading the buyer to expect a low price the next time he orders; and it establishes a precedent on the particular job, for which it will be very hard to secure a higher price should the customer desire to reorder.

If the printing business is to be conducted along true, businesslike lines, correct business principles must be established and followed. The 1915 convention of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World, which met at Toronto, Canada, recognized the need for this, and

ten "Standards of Practice" were adopted by the printing division, or "Department of Graphic Arts." These standards were so well considered, and indicate such an accurate knowledge of existing conditions on the part of the advertising men who were responsible for them, that they have since been indorsed and highly approved by the largest organization of employing printers, the United Typothetæ and Franklin Clubs of America, and by leading printers and manufacturers of printers' supplies. Following is the text of these standards, which might well be called the business code of every master printer in America :

1. To give full value for every dollar received.
2. To charge fair prices, viz., known cost plus a reasonable profit.
3. To subscribe to and work for truth and honesty in business ; to avoid substitution, broken promises, unbusinesslike methods.
4. To coöperate in establishing and maintaining approved business ethics.
5. To be original producers and creators, not copyists.
6. To be promotive, looking to the needs of the customer, analyzing his requirements and *devising new and effective means for promoting and extending his business.*
7. *To place emphasis upon quality rather than price, service to the customer being the first consideration.*
8. To merit the support of buyers of their product by living up to the spirit as well as the letter of these standards.
9. To develop, by coöperation with other departments of the Associated Advertising Clubs, an ever-strengthening bond of union to the end that the service rendered to advertising by the graphic arts may achieve its highest efficiency.

10. To aid in securing just and harmonious relations between employer and employed by establishing honorable conditions of employment.

Trade customs are the rules which are supposed to prevail in the printing trade, but are quite as frequently conspicuous by their absence.

Printing organizations in a number of cities are making an effort to standardize the customs of the trade and to promote their observance by making the public more familiar with them. To this end, these trade rules are being printed on cards, to be hung prominently in the business office, and the effect must be beneficial.

The trouble with many of these lists of customs is that they are too long and there are too many of them. The customer, who is expected to note the rules of the office by seeing them displayed on a wall card, must read and study about a column of matter to learn what he is expected to do.

The Ben Franklin Club of Louisville, Ky., improved upon this condition by condensing the customs and eliminating some of them. The result is nine short paragraphs—short enough to be printed on a letterhead or an estimate blank, and either one of these forms constitutes a suitable medium for conveying a knowledge of printing-trade customs to the public.

Following are these customs as published in Louisville:

All shipments of printed matter shall be at purchaser's risk of delay.

All orders accepted are subject to delays by fire, accident, strikes or other causes beyond our control.

It being impossible to print the exact quantity ordered, it is agreed that a shortage or excess in count, varying not more than five per cent of the quantity ordered, at a pro-rata price, will be accepted as filling the order.

Postals and stamped envelopes require an immediate outlay of cash, and check for same should accompany order.

All quotations are made subject to acceptance within ten days. Alterations from original copy or proofs will be charged for on a time basis.

All copy shall be legible and properly prepared.

All cuts and plates furnished shall be type-high and in good condition.

Terms: Net cash; no discount.

CHAPTER TWO

Building a Printing Business

IN building a printing business, it is quite as necessary to have a plan of the business structure as it is to have a plan for building a house. Many a printer has failed for lack of a definite plan of action. He may labor day and night and be noted in his town for his industry, but if his work is misdirected energy there is little prospect of his succeeding.

It is apparent that a small printing plant cannot handle all kinds of printing orders to advantage, and it should be equally evident that the manager of such a shop should therefore select the kind of work that he can do advantageously, soliciting orders for such work and letting other and perhaps larger business go because it is beyond his capacity.

There are as many kinds of printing as there are of ground cereals, for example; yet we see mills that grind only certain grains, few if any attempting to mill all the various food products that are manufactured from cereals. There are some classes of work, such as large posters, that are absolutely impossible for the small printshop to produce; and there are other lines which could, perhaps, be produced but which would be undesirable and unprofitable because out of the ordinary line of orders. There is economy in

handling a single line or a few kinds of work because every one connected with the plant becomes familiar with work that is similar to previous orders and unconsciously makes better time on it. The shop that makes a specialty of letterheads and other small commercial forms will show lower cost records than the large plant doing but little of this small work. And the same principle holds true all through the great variety of printing grist that comes to the printing mill. The printer should "stick to his last" as far as circumstances will permit, and at the end of a business year will make a better showing than if his ambition or enterprise leads him frequently to get out of his beaten track in handling unfamiliar or unusual work.

Next in importance to selecting the kind of work that he can handle to advantage, is the choice of the customers that a printer wishes to serve. And if the matter be handled systematically, patrons of a certain kind can be drawn to a particular shop and can be held as customers, even in the face of strong competition. In selecting customers in advance of their becoming actual patrons, the first consideration is their credit, and usually this credit should be near to the top of the rating list. Few printers can afford to take chances on the payment of bills, and it is one of the evils of the trade that persons who could not buy a dollar's worth of groceries on credit find it not hard to secure credit for printing amounting to many times as much. Print-

ing is not usually a cash business, and for this reason, if no other, great care should be used in securing a deposit or good evidence of credit responsibility before doing work for a new or unknown firm.

In selecting customers-to-be, another consideration is to follow certain trades which will likely be productive of similar work. If a printer decides that he can handle the office supplies of manufacturers and wholesale houses, for example, a list of these houses in his territory should be prepared. This should be done by securing the correct names and addresses of the houses and, when possible, the names of the managers or buyers. It will also be convenient to have some information regarding the nature of the businesses conducted.

With a good list of this kind, which need not necessarily be large at first, the next step is to solicit the business of these firms systematically, regularly and frequently. If they are located in the same city as the printer, a good solicitor should put them on his calling list and make regular visits with a persistence that, after several months, will result either in orders or in some definite reason why they cannot be secured. In breaking into new territory, the salesman should try to have something new to show and fresh arguments each time he calls. The custom of limiting a call to a single question, "Anything for me today?" will never succeed in securing business from firms that are not already patrons. The salesman must appear each time

in a new garb, as it were, offering suggestions that are likely to be helpful to the firm he is soliciting.

The same principle applies in soliciting business by mail. Each letter, folder or circular that goes out should contain some specific argument for business. Reasons, and good ones, must be presented to get a first order, or even an inquiry, by mail. And the first literature sent out should be directed particularly to getting an opportunity to quote prices or submit samples of work. Inquiries of this kind are very valuable to a salesman. They "break the ice" and avoid the "cold canvas" so obnoxious to the salesman. The advertising matter should go direct to the point and should be as nearly perfect as possible, from a typographical standpoint. The order in which the points are presented and the harmonious appearance of the work are always important.

A successful mail-order advertiser told me recently that he had learned by expensive experience that his literature must consist almost entirely of arguments, leading up to the point where the order blank could be introduced and the reader asked to sign it at the psychological moment. "If we let the reader's mind get away from the direct line leading up to the order, we don't get the business," he said. And this is the point I wish to emphasize—that soliciting printing orders by mail is a cold-blooded proposition, and, to be successful, must consist largely of strong arguments show-

ing why the house sending out the advertising is the best printing house to do the work. General statements should be avoided and the prospect continually urged to take a single definite step—to place one order or to ask for quotations on a single job.

It takes patience to realize on mail advertising sent direct to the prospect, and it may take weeks or months of follow-up work before winning a first order from a big firm whose business is desirable. This sort of advertising must therefore be carefully planned for some time in advance. Each mailing should have some connection with the literature that precedes and follows it, and a record of every piece of advertising sent out should be kept on filing cards. First orders can also be entered on these same cards if it is not practical to enter all orders in this way.

There is no exact standard to follow in designing and writing the advertising for a mail-order campaign. The copy should be of real interest to the reader, the paper stock and printing should be harmonious, and the literature should be inclosed in envelopes that will insure its reaching its destination in good order. One-cent postage is successful on some literature, and other forms get better results when sealed, requiring two cents or more postage. Form letters are good, if not too long, and particularly when accompanied by other printing. For instance, if a printer produces a creditable piece of printing for some customer, he might re-

print the job for use in his advertising and send it out as a sample, accompanied by a letter to drive home the point that a similar job, or one just as good, would be good advertising for the prospect.

In writing form letters, there is one thing to be avoided in starting a letter, and that is any reference to failure to receive replies to letters previously sent. Nothing is gained by such reference. It has been too common in mail-order advertising.

In handling business by mail, resulting from direct advertising, personal letters should be used exclusively after the first inquiry from the prospect. Handle such inquiries just as a letter from a regular customer would be handled, except that a little more care is needed to make the correspondent familiar with the ways of the printing house. Samples and dummies are essential in handling printing orders by mail; and quotations should be exact, specifying paper and sending a sample of the exact weight and size with the quotation. In sending samples of paper it is always best to send a sample of liberal size, or, if it is to be used on a booklet or folder, make up an accurate dummy to show how it will look on the job. Samples of type should also be submitted, not in the form of a specimen book of all the type in the plant, but by setting a few lines or a page of the job under consideration, or by submitting a sample of another job, showing the type suggested, in actual use.

It is important in handling orders by mail to state definitely by what date delivery can be made. It is not necessary to say that the job will be shipped on a certain date, but on or before a stated time; and such promises should be adhered to even more closely than promises for delivery on local orders, because delays in delivery are frequent. Prices should always be quoted in such a way that the buyer will understand whether he or the printer is to pay delivery charges. Quotations f. o. b. the city in which the printer is located are most satisfactory, and at the same time it should be plainly stated in some way on the quotation that the responsibility of the printer ceases upon delivery of the goods in good order to the express company or railroad.

Systematized soliciting is the only kind that is really profitable. The printer should study his field and the prospective customers that he wants to make his own, and continually try to find new ways in which his plant can handle the work of these future patrons as well or better than it is now being handled.

One good solicitor, well directed, will bring more profitable business to a printing plant than a half-dozen men following the "hit-or-miss" system of calling on anybody who is easy to reach. Some of the best business is the hardest to get, and the salesman who does not follow a definite plan of persistent and intelligent solicitation will never get the most desirable orders.

It is possible for even a small plant to make rapid progress in increasing the sales by laying out a plan for the advertising and for the salesmen covering a period of several months, or a year, and adhering closely to this plan. It must certainly be based upon right principles and be backed up by the kind of service that is promised. The equipment must be adequate to the kind of orders handled, and promises must be lived up to.

A new customer is valuable not alone for the profit on his first order but for his future business. Business houses which get satisfactory service at prices that do not seem to them too high will continue to purchase from the same house until some definite thing draws or drives them to another printer. The frequent reference to "our printers" or "my printer" shows that the general trend of business is to continue to buy printing from the same concern until a rival induces a change by quoting lower prices or giving better service.

Customers, once secured, should be held, therefore, even at high cost. They are doubtless the most valuable asset of any business. A printing plant that has closed down is sold as junk, and the used machinery, types, etc., will not bring more than a third or a half as much as the plant would sell for if it were running, even though it might be operating at a loss.

A printer can well afford to take a lot of injury to his pride, can let the customer demand unreasonable

things in the way of delivery, and can submit to many unpleasant and unjust conditions, if he knows that he is making a good profit from the work of the offending customer.

CHAPTER THREE

Laying Out a Selling Campaign

AS the selling of the product is without doubt one of the most important departments of the printing business, it is equally plain that a selling plan or campaign is essential to even a moderate degree of success. The day of the hit-or-miss method of soliciting is past; instances are exceedingly rare where a printing house can depend for business upon a choice factory or office location, upon lack of competition, or upon any other one advantage. Printing is not usually "ordered" by the customer; it is "sold" to him, and in order to make the selling department of a modern printing plant effective, producing results by economical effort and expense, there must be a definite plan of action. The selling of the product must be systematized and put upon a sound business basis.

Half a billion dollars is the sum said to be spent each year for magazine and newspaper advertising, which sum is probably three or four times as much as is expended for printed advertising used in direct advertising campaigns. This is not because advertising in regular publications is better or cheaper than advertising sent direct to the prospect, but is a result of the selling plan by which much of this space is sold. Every city has its advertising agencies which, acting as go-

between the publishers and the public, solicit advertising space for any publication that the buyer may choose. They receive from the publishers a commission ranging from ten to twenty-five per cent for the orders they secure. Many advertisers will admit, often enthusiastically, that direct advertising has given them better returns than their newspaper and magazine publicity; but the printing trade has no such powerful organization to solicit business, and the result is that printed advertising is not so generally used as publication space.

Direct advertising is coming into its own, however, and the amount of printed matter used by advertisers to put their stories direct into the hands of prospective buyers is increasing each year, and the printer who is alert to take advantage of the all too few conditions which seem to favor him will not be slow to profit from the increasing popularity and use of printed advertising in campaigns of this kind.

Every printing concern of any considerable size should have a well-organized selling department, for handling all of those details incident to the securing of orders. The printer's own advertising, the soliciting of salesmen, window displays, correspondence regarding inquiries and orders, and any other items pertaining to the marketing of the product, should be handled by this department. A competent head of the department should direct the work along all these lines, and

an accurate record should be kept of the total expenses incurred in getting business, and of the results secured.

The selling department should be a selling unit, each factor strengthening and helping all the others. Every salesman or worker in the business office should be shown how to do his own work without waste of time or effort, and he should be encouraged to offer suggestions that will make the department more effective in securing orders at satisfactory prices. The coöperation of the heads of the various departments of one of the big daily papers of the country recently came under my observation. At nine o'clock each morning, all these heads meet together with the business manager, editor and owners to talk over the plans for the day and to offer suggestions. This gathering is facetiously called the "mothers' meeting," but the good that comes from the few minutes spent together is every day apparent in the successful paper published. If a printing business is large enough such a plan might well be followed, with a view to standardizing the selling of printing and making the work of selling more effective.

Taking up some of the principal divisions in the selling department, advertising, personal solicitation and mail orders are perhaps most important. I have put advertising first because of the wonderful possibilities it offers in the selling campaign. The printer's own advertising has, nevertheless, been neglected, abused and kicked around until many printers give it little or no

attention. In a business where most of the orders are in the form of printed advertising for business men in other lines, the advertising of the printer ought to be a model of excellence ; it ought to be as good as or better than the advertising of any other trade or line. In what other business can the merchant send out an advertisement that is, at the same time, a sample of the goods he has to sell? Yet the printer's advertising is always just this, and if it is slovenly done the public will not care to buy goods "like the sample" for use in its advertising.

It is not alone the quality of the printed advertising of the plant that is important. Of even greater importance is the plan behind the printed publicity and the method of distributing it. Good advertisers know what they are going to do for months or a year ahead, and they know how they are going to do it. The printer should be equally systematic, and he should plan the advertising for some time in the future. Lists of prospective customers should be compiled, and printed advertising sent out to these lists in accordance with a prearranged system, each advertisement having some connection with those that precede and follow it. The advertising should be coöperative with the work of the salesmen, and if the results of the advertising are recorded and tabulated, plans for the future can be intelligently based on the results of the past. Without going into the details of the kind of copy that should

be used for advertising printing, it may be said that all the printing should rate high by the following standards: a live subject likely to be interesting to the reader; strong, convincing English in the copy; appropriate illustrations and correct display; good composition and presswork; and suitable binding.

The work of salesmen, whether city or traveling, should be directed work. Calling lists should be made up and adhered to; they should be corrected and revised frequently. The salesmen should be shown the help that the advertising is to them and should be required to coöperate with it.

The personality of a salesman is unquestionably of great value to those he represents if it is a good one. By means of this he makes and holds business friends, secures orders he would not otherwise get, and thus wins business for his house. The salesman should always remember that his personality is, to the buyer, the personality of the house, and the conscientious salesman will sink his individuality in the name of the firm he represents. The manager or head of the selling department should keep in close touch with a salesman's patrons so that they will feel that their business is with the house rather than with the individual salesman. We frequently hear of a salesman who leaves one house to associate himself with another and carries with him all or most of the customers that he has been selling. The salesman is not to blame for this condition; it is

the manager who is at fault in not binding the salesman's patrons more closely to the establishment.

Solicitors should be encouraged in forming habits of calling on customers or prospects regularly ; the necessity of always having something new and interesting to talk about should be made plain to them, and the methods by which some salesmen are more than ordinarily successful should be investigated and offered for the use of the other representatives. Coöperative work always beats individual effort, and there is much to learn by the ordinary printer salesman as evidenced by the average salaries paid for such work. A few salesmen may be underpaid, but most of them are paid at a rate commensurate with their ability as shown by their sales. Education along the lines of selling methods will raise the standard of work and of salaries, and should thus be a subject of mutual interest to both employer and employee.

Selling printing by mail, which will be covered more fully in a later chapter of this book, is another important department of the selling end of printing. Every plant can do something to secure mail-order business, and small starts have often led to considerable success. In selling printing by mail it is necessary to avoid those classes of work which the plant is not equipped for handling. An occasional order can be sent out to be done, but most of the business should be printing that can be done in the house. Service and prompt delivery

are requisites in supplying customers in other cities and towns, and the handling of details must be done with great vigilance. Every statement or promise made in a letter should be rigidly adhered to. If some printers are as careless in making and keeping their promises regarding mail orders as they are in handling the local work, their mail-order path, if they have one, must be a thorny one.

Broken promises are doubtlessly a blot upon the whole printing trade. Promises are usually carelessly made and more carelessly kept. The American public is fairly familiar with this laxity in keeping promises regarding delivery, and this is one reason why the printing trade is not held in higher regard.

This very condition of affairs provides the opportunity for good advertising by the printer who actually does keep his promises. A London (England) firm recently issued a large folder to impress its patrons with its regard for promises concerning work. The folder indicates that printers' promises are as lightly given and kept in England as in this country, but the advertisement and the way the subject is treated might be adapted by many American printers, after a solemn resolve had been made to avoid broken promises in the future.

The following extracts from the folder referred to indicate the way in which the subject is treated by this enterprising English firm:

With pride we say it:

Our promises are always kept.

We miss a lot of work that we could have, simply because we will not mislead the client; we will not take an order from a firm unless we know we can do it to time.

With the best intentions we could take all orders offered and "try to deliver" at the time wanted, but that is not "Hotspur" policy.

The "Hotspur" way spells c-e-r-t-a-i-n-t-y.

When you give the order, and we give the delivery promise, only earthquakes, strikes and fires can make us break our word.

And you know how rare those eventualities are in English printing.

You also know, if you have dealt much with printers, the value of a promise—our promise—upon which you can rely.

So, for your next job, talk to us, write us or let us talk to you.

Send us your name; we'll come and tell you more about this service and printing certainty which is gradually bringing all other printers nearer to a true realization of the obligations behind their promises.

A most interesting piece of printers' advertising was recently produced by the Smith-Brooks Printing Company, indicating one way in which the product of the presses may be sold by promoting the use of some particular kind of printing. The copy used for one of the advertisements follows:

TURNING COLOR INTO SALES

Pictures sold two hundred million dollars' worth of goods for three firms last year. The three firms are Montgomery Ward & Co., Baltimore Bargain House and Sears, Roebuck & Co.

None of these firms employs a single salesman. They depend

entirely upon printed matter to sell their goods. They show a picture of every article they sell—

—and every year they are showing more and more of these pictures in full color.

For example, at the time Sears, Roebuck & Co. were using one-color illustrations in their shoe catalog their annual shoe sales totaled \$1,250,000.

One year as an experiment they printed the pictures of their shoes in two and three colors.

And that year their shoe sales increased to \$4,000,000. They have since applied the use of color to the clothing, vehicle and several other sections of their catalog—

—because it pays them to use color.

To show manufacturers and all other should-be users of color plates and printing the value of the use of color in selling goods, the Smith-Brooks Company has issued a portfolio 8¾x12½ in size showing ten commercial subjects in four colors. It is entitled "Turning Color Into Sales." It is an expensive book and it cannot be distributed broadcast. It will be sent free to any firm that is interested enough to write for a copy. It is an eye-opener as to the possibilities of more and cheaper sales.

CHAPTER FOUR

How to Secure Printing Orders

IN no line of trade is competition any keener than in the printing industry. There are a number of good reasons why this is so. There are no standards of value, because the cost system has not been universally adopted; every printing establishment solicits orders, because printing is one line where soliciting is entirely ethical, and the diversified characters of the printing salesmen also tend to make competition close. The field is also overcrowded in many cities and towns, where printers must divide the total trade of a limited territory, resulting in serious price cutting.

If there are any principles, therefore, which a salesman can rely on to give him an advantage over his competitors when grades and prices are about the same, the ambitious salesman wants to know what they are.

I believe that the greatest single advantage a salesman can have is his own personality, whether natural or cultivated. The old comparison between the mere order taker, who simply writes down the order without selling effort on his part, and the real salesman, who secures the order in the face of strenuous competition or apathy on the part of the buyer, hinges upon this one thing—personality. An old salesman of printing and stationery recently told me that personality is of

even greater importance than price, and from my own experience I cannot but agree with him.

At one time I handled the account of a large firm that purchased from four thousand to five thousand dollars per month in stationery, office supplies and printing. Scores of competitors were constantly bidding for this business, but with small success, and the buyer was kind enough to tell me that it was my own personality that brought the orders to my house rather than the prestige of that house or even its prices or service in filling the orders that I secured. As the buyer was not personally acquainted with any other representative of my house I took his statement as true, and offer it here, not to boom my own particular brand of personality, but to impress upon other salesmen the importance of cultivating a personality that will bring about more and larger sales from the business houses upon whom they call.

There is but little credit as a salesman due to the man who secures a printing order simply because his price is lower than competing quotations. The man who gets the order, even though his price is higher, is the real salesman, the desirable representative. He is justly entitled to all the honors that rightfully belong to the successful American salesman, the one most important cog in the machine of present-day commerce. And this suggests that the correct basis for paying salesmen is a percentage of the profits of the orders

they handle rather than a percentage on the amount of their sales. A salesman is entitled to payment on this basis, and such an arrangement should be an incentive to get better prices for the house represented.

The head of a business college which buys thousands of dollars' worth of printing and stationery every year paid a high tribute to the salesman who handled these orders. In the house-organ of the school he published a paragraph something like this: "The representative of a certain stationery house who has for some time been calling at the college office and handling our orders for office and school supplies recently showed by a small incident the real reason why he has been able to hold our business in these lines in the face of competition, and the incident may well serve as a valuable practical illustration to the young people in whose success this school is always interested. The school wanted a small order filled quickly for some unexpected additions to our class in typewriting. I accidentally met the salesman referred to on the street, gave him the order and explained the necessity for quick delivery. Although he was just turning in to an office where he had a large contract pending, he postponed his call, and immediately telephoned and arranged to have the order delivered to us at once, although he was aware that the stock would first have to be delivered to his own house and through his house's delivery department to us. He arranged all of this by telephone,

with quick and satisfactory results. It is attention of this kind that is appreciated, and we predict a brilliant future for this young salesman."

Such qualities as courtesy, promptness, accuracy, accommodation, enthusiastic interest, attention to small details, care and exactitude are what constitute service in a business house, and these same qualities go to make up the personal service of a salesman. The salesman who is willing to go out of his way to oblige a customer will find that when competition arises he will have an advantage over the more careless or untried salesman of a rival house. Treat your customer just a little better than he expects to be treated if that be possible, and your reports will show sales instead of blanks. Service that serves is what customers want and will pay for with orders.

In addition to attributes named, appearance, manner of talking and general conduct while in the office of a patron contribute largely to personality, and play an important part in the opinion the customer forms of a salesman. Cultivate a pleasing and accommodating personality. It is more effective than the giving of cigars or the buying of dinners for your customers, although these things have their proper place. It is your everyday business relations with the buyers that count most when orders are to be placed. If the customer knows that your word can be relied on, that your knowledge and judgment are dependable, and that you

are obliging and eager to serve, no matter what competition you may have you will stand well with him.

Modern business is coming to mean the selling of goods of merit at a profit—goods that the buyer can put to profitable use without disappointment.

The young salesman who starts out with a proper appreciation of the principles here laid down will succeed and rise faster than the frivolous representative who depends rather upon the reputation of the house he represents or his ability to quote lower prices than his competitors. The personal contact between buyer and seller is the principal reason why salesmen are employed. If it were not for the human element in a sale, all business might be conducted by catalogs or through the mails. But this human element is so important that, no matter how much the mail-order method of doing business may increase, the good salesman will always be in demand, and the fact that the salesman of proved ability need never look long for a position furnishes food for reflection.

An interesting prize competition was conducted by the first business show held at Los Angeles, Cal. A silver cup was offered for the best definition in fifty words of a salesman. Many and varied were the definitions received, but among them there were several which seemed to point particularly to the printing salesman. The following are representative and pertinent:

"A God-fearing, healthy, ambitious, loyal, willing-to-learn-more human being, who has investigated his field of endeavor and resolved to fulfill his position of trust and representation to the best interests of mankind."

"He must first educate himself in the goods he is selling, know where and how they are made, and if possible be able to manufacture the goods himself. He must have confidence in the goods he handles and the firm he works for. He must tell the truth. He must educate himself that what he says is so, and he will have no trouble in convincing the buyer in his statements."

"Properly to impress a business man and to obtain his patronage, one must show that he labors earnestly, zealously and capably in the interest of both his client and firm, with a thoroughly clean conscience coupled with that certain honesty peculiar to the man of heart—one who is fair to the people."

"Salesmanship consists in the ability so to throw yourself into the atmosphere of the customer as to make your personality his, his desire yours, and the unity of the two producing a harmonious situation which must lead to results."

But little has been done toward organizing the printing salesmen of this country, although some of the trade organizations have taken the first steps toward effecting some sort of working agreement and coöperative association of their salesmen. It would be helpful to the entire printing trade to have the men who sell the goods meet together in local organizations, with perhaps a national body with which the locals might be affiliated. We have organizations of local secretaries of printers' organizations, superintendents' associations, and organizations of rulers, bookbinders, managers,

foremen and photo-engravers. A live organization of printing salesmen in every large city, with educational work as a prominent feature, is quite feasible and within the scope of the activities of the local printers' organizations. New York has made such a start. It may be true, as has been said, that it is difficult to get a good printing salesman because all of the good men are employed; but there is a field of work that many good men are overlooking—the field in which the salesman can be of assistance in raising the standard of work sold. A good salesman should constantly try to sell better printing.

The man who decides to make the selling of printing his life work, or who shows a real, active interest in his vocation, should be encouraged to originate selling plans and be supported in every possible way. Loyalty and maximum effort are two of the requisites most to be desired in a salesman, and the house he represents can do much to promote both.

An eastern manufacturing house, not in the printing line, has worked out a plan that seems adapted to printing salesmen, and that has many advantages, an important one of which is that the plan obviates frequent or yearly adjustments of salary or commission on a new basis. The concern referred to engages a salesman at an agreed salary and with the understanding that his sales for the first year are expected to reach a stipulated amount. On sales over this amount

a commission of five per cent is paid him above his salary. The second year, if his sales have exceeded this minimum, his salary is increased to total his salary and commission of the first year, and sales for the second year are expected to reach the total for the previous twelve months, plus one thousand dollars. If his sales the second year are larger than this minimum, five per cent commission is paid him on the excess. This plan is continued, year after year, and has brought good results in increased sales and satisfactory work. Such an arrangement with salesmen of printing would eliminate many of the present difficulties and seems to present an adequate and just method of arriving at the proper remuneration for a printing salesman. In setting the minimum sales expected for any year, the profit on these sales should be considered; as selling expense, whether in the form of salary or commission to the salesman, advertising or other expense, should not exceed a fixed percentage of the profits on the work.

CHAPTER FIVE

Improvement of the Trade

SOME really remarkable results have been accomplished in the printing trade from the coöperation of master printers in the past few years, and these results are not alone along the line of financial profit but in friendship, acquaintance and a better spirit among men who are naturally competitors. It was not many years ago that a man in the printing business regarded all his competitors as his personal enemies. He ascribed to them almost every moral delinquency, and refused to credit them with business honor or truthfulness. Now in every large city competing master printers gather in a friendly way at business meetings of their local organizations and at social luncheons, where competition is forgotten in educational and other coöperative work for the good of the individual and of the trade.

The benefits of becoming better acquainted have been proved to be real benefits, and the advantages of coöperation have been thoroughly demonstrated.

Realizing that much has already been accomplished through local and national organizations of printers, there is still much good that can be done by organizing in cities and towns not now organized and by carrying on the departments of work already started and adding others as conditions warrant.

A broad field for organization effort is in establishing some sort of standard of prices. It is small wonder that the layman often says that "something must be the matter with the printing business" when he gets quotations from three competing printers in his home town varying from eight to twenty dollars for the same job. This is a condition that should not prevail, and if prices cannot be brought nearer to some sort of uniformity through organization, it will never be accomplished. It has been conclusively proved that hour costs do not vary greatly in the large shop and the small one, and that costs in the small town and the city are not far apart. Education along cost-finding methods and class work in estimating would seem to be the remedy for such loose quoting of prices, and it is to the interest of every printer not only to know his own costs but to have his competitor equally familiar with estimating and cost-finding. Printers must educate their competitors as well as themselves if they are to receive the full benefits of coöperation.

There is room for further development in the credit and collection departments of printers' organizations, and it is quite possible to perfect these departments so that no buyer of printing can leave more than one unpaid bill behind him. Undesirable patrons who do not pay their bills should be reported at once and the trade saved from further loss.

Local organizations should always be willing to co-

operate with other civic bodies in upholding home institutions and in promoting home trading. The right kind of appeal to civic pride will influence many people to leave their orders for printing with their home-town printers, and, by coöperating with other local manufacturers, home-town goods may be made very attractive. Newspaper articles showing the importance and scope of the printing trade to a town, the value of the annual product, the amount of the printing pay roll, etc., are excellent in getting public sentiment headed the right way.

The real value of the board-of-trade method of upholding prices in the printing trade has long been a mooted question, and representative leaders of the trade do not, and perhaps never will, agree upon the relative importance of fixing prices and coöperating with their competitors along board-of-trade lines.

As a premise to an intelligent discussion of this important phase of marketing printing, a definition of just what the board-of-trade plan is may be helpful to a better understanding of the apparent advantages and disadvantages of this matter of dealing with the public. It is, then, the coöperation of a number of printers in a city to uphold prices that will allow a reasonable profit on their orders. This is accomplished by maintaining a central office with the secretary as its head. This office is presumed to be the clearing house, as it were, for every important job of printing upon

which any associated member may be asked to quote prices.

The common method followed is this: A prospective buyer of printing asks one of the members of the board of trade for a price on a certain job of work. This printer tells him that he will give him an estimate "Tomorrow." Then the printer notifies the secretary of the board of trade of the job, and it is mutually agreed with the other members of the association what price the first printer shall quote on the job. The other printers agree to protect him in his price, should they be asked to bid on the same job, and they frequently are; or the members may agree to let some printer other than the first one quoting secure the job by putting in the lowest bid.

The secretary of one of these active organized associations recently told me that the plan was working fine in the particular city where he was located. "Our members are so mutually agreeable," he told me, "that I have seen a number of printers come together in my office and decide who would get a five-thousand-dollar job by the flip of a coin." This is probably an example of an extreme case of coöperation.

On the other hand, I know of cities where a board of trade has been organized by the printers, not once but two or three times, to be abandoned each time, usually after a brief, stormy existence. The principal difficulty in such cases has been that the coöperating members

of the association did not coöperate; each one was apparently suspicious of all the others, and, beginning by holding back information which should have been divulged for the good of all, the members of the association allowed it finally to disintegrate by failing to report the prospective orders for printing that they had been asked to bid on.

Another potent cause of the disintegration of these organizations was the fact that in each case there were several large- or medium-sized plants that would not join the association and that would frequently underbid the board-of-trade prices for work decided on by the members. Then the job would go to the printer who did not belong to the board of trade, and there was general dissatisfaction as a result. Further, the public is not slow in learning that a board of trade is in existence in its midst, and printing buyers are prone to look upon such an organization as savoring of trust methods. They quite naturally prefer to patronize the printer who tells them he is "independent" and "outside the trust."

The board-of-trade idea is not adapted to usefulness in the small community; and even in the large city, where it has been most successful, it is not destined, I believe, completely to control the situation. In some cities the federal authorities have opposed the board of trade on the ground that it was a violation of the anti-trust laws. The principal obstacle, however,

has been that the members are not loyal to their obligations, and the organization has died because of this lack of coöperation.

Better success might be achieved along board-of-trade lines if no attempt were to be made to fix prices or to set minimum rates below which the members might not go in their bids. If the organization were purely educational, directed to show the members the folly of marketing their product below the cost mark, in time the effect might be much better than the efforts to protect members in holding their trade.

In organizing any association of printers, one of the first and most important considerations should be to make the objects and operation of the organization perfectly legitimate by keeping it entirely within the laws regulating trusts. Legal advice should be sought to avoid any actual or technical violation of federal statutes designed for the protection of the people from illegitimate combinations in restraint or control of trade. The printing trade needs no violation of any trust laws to uphold it, and local clubs of printers can accomplish everything necessary without violating any provision of our national laws.

The old adage, "In union there is strength," seems to apply with particular force to the printing trade, and it is difficult to find adequate reasons why printers have been so dilatory in organizing for mutual benefit. The master printers have long had the example of the

typographical union before them, and they have been familiar with the benefits of organization to the employee; but until recent years they seem to have preferred to fight singly against the enemies of fair prices and reasonable profits. It has been a case of every man for himself, with every one else against him. The proprietor of a printshop had to fight the public, and he had to fight his competitors also; often he was arrayed against his own workmen in settling claims or grievances of the union. Happily, this condition is now changed in a measure, but the master printers are still far behind their own employees in the matter of organization. The benefits of the United Typothetæ and Franklin Clubs, cost congresses and other master-printers' organizations are so apparent that it is difficult to see how a man in the printing business can be so blind to his own interests as to refuse or neglect to affiliate himself with one or more of them. And his interest should not stop there, but should go out to include every other printer in his territory. The interest of the individual is the interest of the whole trade, and the more general representation a printing organization has in the territory covered, the more effective work can be done.

In hundreds of cities and towns in this country there is no local printers' organization, and prices are cut and slashed because of ignorance of correct cost-finding methods and because of the old mistaken idea of

competition. In these localities it should be the self-constituted work of one or more of the men in the craft to effect an organization and to make its advantages so clear and so prominent to the other printers that their interest and membership may be secured. The local should affiliate with a national body and so profit from the great American campaign of education that is being carried on. The Typothetæ, in particular, has been most liberal in helping new local organizations to get well started and established on a solid foundation. This interest has not been confined merely to moral support, but financial help has been given, organizers and cost experts sent out, lectures arranged and many other helps furnished. The national organization bears the same relation to the locals that the local does to the individual members and should be just as fully supported.

The success of printers' organizations, national as well as local, depends very largely upon publicity and printed matter. And the attitude of the trade press toward organization work has been of great assistance in the emancipation of the printing business through coöperation. Almost every trade journal in the printing field has been not only liberal but impartial in treating matters pertaining to organization. The official organs of the national organizations and of some of the locals are also effective means of promoting association work, and a few of the daily and weekly news-

papers have given the subject serious consideration, particularly on the occasions of national conventions. The importance of these means toward more effective community work should not be underestimated. All printers should appreciate and encourage such publicity.

CHAPTER SIX

The Folly of Price Cutting

THE cutting of prices to the point where there is little or no profit (often a loss) is one of the worst evils of the trade, and the work of the cost congresses and printers' organizations along educational lines has shown to the printers who are the sufferers from this custom how widespread this evil is.

It is not difficult to prove conclusively why it is a detriment to the individual printer and to the trade in general to sell the product at a price that will not show a reasonable profit, but to do away with the nuisance is a task worthy of the best efforts of every man who has the opportunity or influence to do something to uplift the craft from this cutting of prices.

Printers cut prices for several reasons. Often they do so through ignorance. I have seen printers contend that they had made money on certain jobs in the face of the most positive evidence to the contrary. Careless estimating and price making are responsible for many other cut prices. The printer who makes a practice of guessing that a job will cost a certain amount will sell his work at a loss or less about as often as he will get a fair price or an exorbitant one.

Competition is also frequently responsible for cut prices. When the customer boldly announces that

“Jones offered to do this job for five dollars, but if you want it you can have it,” he will often get it done his way and at his price. The printer is afraid to take a stand for what he may know is the right price and foolishly lets the customer make the price for him, a condition that does not so generally prevail in any other trade with which I am familiar.

The fourth reason for cut prices is a mistaken idea that the plant can be kept busy in this way. This is a fallacy, because cut prices do not create new business. They benefit only the customer, and it is rare that the cutting of a price to cost will induce a man to order work that he was not disposed to buy.

Every printer should study these things and see for himself how entirely foolish it is to expect to conduct his business successfully in this way. None of the reasons given are valid when subjected to close scrutiny, and the printer who cultivates an independent spirit and stops worrying about what the other fellow is doing will be able to retire to a life of ease when his price-cutting, worrying competitors are growing gray in a service that becomes more irksome each year.

Education in cost-finding methods will in time dissipate ignorance and have a large influence in putting prices where they should be. Carelessness can be overcome by cultivating the habit of exactness in all matters, especially in the checking of estimates. A stiff backbone will discourage the customer who wants to

make the prices on his own work, and a little consideration of the question of keeping the plant busy when there is a dearth of orders will convince any one that it is a mistake to look on the "filler" job as advantageous.

The fluctuations in the business of the ordinary commercial printing plant might well be compared to the waves of the ocean, which rise to a crest, and then fall away to form a trough. In most plants the volume of business often rises far above the capacity of the shop for a few days or weeks, to be followed by a depression, or dearth of orders, which makes it necessary either to enforce vacations on some of the employees or to keep them on the pay roll even though there is little or nothing for them to do.

This condition is the bane of the printing business, and is a problem requiring the best business judgment for its solution. It is a particularly difficult situation in localities where good printers are scarce, because the employer is loath to "lay off" his good men, knowing that if he does this frequently they will probably secure work elsewhere, perhaps with his most active competitor, and when business improves it will be hard to replace them with men equally as good.

The condition described has brought about the "filler" job, known to every plant. Such work is taken at cost, or at a price a little over or under cost, with the excuse that it is better to keep the men employed and the plant running, even on work that pays little if

any profit, than to break up the force or have men and machinery idle. The value ascribed to the "filler" is a complete fallacy. It is not better to keep the plant running on unprofitable work; it is much better to close down part or all of the departments.

The filler job exercises a tendency toward lower prices; it is an injustice to regular patrons and an injury to the entire trade. Printers should learn to secure a satisfactory volume of business by advertising or soliciting rather than by this mistaken idea that unprofitable work is ever an advantage. Patience may be necessary and time is often required to secure an amount of work to keep men and equipment working nearly to the capacity of the plant, but the filler is a delusion and can be defended only in the rarest of cases.

It is not wise to attempt to run the plant at full capacity except at good prices, and many large printing houses do a profitable business each year with several cylinder presses idle much of the time. I know of one firm, in particular, that has even made an asset out of the fact that there are always two or more presses idle and ready to be used on a "rush" job that competitors could not produce within the required time. The printing of ballots and other election supplies must often be done within a limited time, fixed by law; and the plant that has a reputation for promptness, and is known to have the facilities for handling quick work of

this kind on presses not always in use, will usually get this sort of work.

The real and lasting benefits of conducting a printing business on the principle that every job produced must be as near perfect as possible, and that every job must pay a fair profit, were impressed upon me by the experience of an Iowa printer, who recently retired from business, having accumulated sufficient money from his printing business, conducted in this way, to enable him to quit. His hobbies were always to have sufficient material in the plant, to require every workman to do the best work he was capable of, and always to get a profitable price for the product. He was many times called a "crank" and was as often laughed at. He would refuse to accept work at prices which did not seem high enough to show a profit on the high grade he turned out ; but he gathered a clientele of customers who wanted good work and were willing to pay his price for it, and he vindicated his own principles by accumulating a small fortune.

Such a man should be a pattern to the printing fraternity. And there is an example in almost every city of the truth of the statement that competition may be met without cutting the price. There is everywhere a class of people who want the best printing, the same as they want the best of everything they buy ; and it is possible to show these people that they cannot get the best printing at the lowest price. Service and results

may be used to offset the low price of a competitor, and they may be made very attractive.

The small printer can compete with the larger house by promising his personal attention in securing just the sort of work desired, and the large house can compete with the small, price-cutting printer by arguments just as powerful, regarding its equipment and ability to handle the work satisfactorily. I realize that there is a part of the buying public that seems to value a low price more than any other inducement, but when a printer has once demonstrated conclusively to such a buyer that the quality of his work or his service is worth what he charges, his bids for business, based on these two things, will be much more favorably received. Some firms divide up their printing, giving the cheap, common work out on a basis of price only, but reserving the better orders for the printer who they know by past experience can deliver the quality of work required, even though his prices are recognized as higher than those of competing firms. The printer who gets this particular work will succeed in building up an enviable reputation that competing firms will find hard to combat. A reputation for high-quality work is certainly more to be desired than a reputation for being a "cheap printer."

The advertising-service department, treated more fully in another of these chapters, affords a splendid opportunity to combat the low- or cut-price evil. The

printer who can show his customers that he is more than a printer will have less trouble in getting fair prices for his work than the one who depends solely upon a low price to get his orders. The advice of printers is frequently sought by advertisers in making their printed publicity more effective, and when a big buyer of printed advertising finds that the suggestions and advice of a printer are based upon sound principles and extended experience in getting tangible results for other advertisers, he must, in the very nature of things, favor that printer in placing his printing orders.

There is no justification whatever for cutting prices below the cost mark. The practice is ruinous to the printer's own business ; it injures his standing with his customers, and, if his banker knows that he makes price cutting a common practice, it will ruin his credit at the bank. Bankers never cut prices below cost, and there is no trade or profession that I know of in which the pernicious practice of cutting prices to cost or less is anywhere near so common as it is in printing.

I presume that the sharp competition in the printing trade is back of all the reasons that may be advanced as responsible for price cutting ; and if this is so, coöperation and organization ought to provide the remedy. And they have, through educational methods, to a considerable extent. Fewer prices below cost are made now than there were before the advent of cost-finding systems, but the practice of quoting prices

perilously near the cost of production, with a full knowledge of what he is doing, is a phase of the matter that requires backbone and firm determination on the part of the printer who makes a practice of doing it.

The reforms of the craft, of which the abolition of price cutting is a most important one, must come about inside, not outside, the trade. They must receive their impetus from the innermost part of the inside, in the individual brains and minds of the men who direct the printing plants. An individual resolution, at New Year's or on any other day, never knowingly to quote a price that does not include a reasonable and fair margin of profit, should be made by every man whose business it is to make estimates and prices; and it is one resolution that he should regard as a sacred trust to keep, in spite of every temptation to recede from his stand.

It is not fatal, nor even serious, to lose an occasional job on account of the price quoted. Many jobs are lost anyway, even when the prices quoted are so low as to mean a loss; so why not be content to lose a few orders in so good a cause as the righting of printing prices? When a buyer finds that a certain printer will not take an order except it promises a profit, he will not lose his respect for that man or eliminate him from printing consideration. On the contrary, such a printer rises appreciably in the mind of the buyer. He will be considered a better business man, capable of producing

better work. The customer who secures a cutthroat price from a printer does not respect the man for the low price. He laughs in his sleeve at the foolishness of taking work at cost or less, even though he benefits by the condition.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Psychology of Selling Printing

AS applied to the selling of printing, and without considering scientific terms and definitions, psychology may be said to be the influencing of the human mind. A study of psychology is perforce a study of human nature, and the psychology of selling printing is making sales by compelling the prospect to think as the salesman wishes him to. Some of the statements in this chapter may impress the experienced salesman as being unnecessarily elemental, but since this book is intended to interest the beginner as well as the successful salesman, they are made so advisedly.

The salesman who secures an order at a price considerably higher than that quoted by a rival printer gets the business, perhaps unconsciously, by psychological means ; and the power to make men see things as you want them to be seen is a psychological power, akin perhaps to a hypnotic impression. I once solicited business from a man I had never met before, and after I had impressed him, as I wished to do, with the superiority of the service I was offering him over the one he was using, he said: "You must be a hypnotist ; before I talked with you I thought this thing was all right, but now I see how much better it can be done." His remark has stuck in my mind ever since, and I con-

sider that he implied a compliment in the statement. As we hear much of "inside baseball," we might consider the selling of printing by psychological methods as "inside printing." At least it involves a knowledge of the game not possessed by the solicitor with only a superficial familiarity with the trade. He must be fortified with many things to sell the product of the printing press successfully. Every successful printing salesman possesses psychological power, whether he realizes it or not. A pleasing personality, as exemplified in neat clothes, a suave, cheerful manner of speaking, correct use of language, manifest experience and knowledge of the line sold, the ability to read human nature quickly and accurately, the ability to make friends and keep them, the proper mixture of self-respect for the opinions of others, and forcefulness in closing a sale at the right moment, are all things which contribute in some degree to the psychological selling of printing.

By considering some of these qualities which make up the individuality of a salesman, we may learn something of their relative importance, their proper use, and how to cultivate them to greater profit in a business way.

We often hear the remark made, "That man makes a good appearance." Examined more closely, it may be seen that his "good appearance" is due more to neatness of person and clothing than to expensive, fashionable clothes or to regular, handsome features. His gen-

eral appearance is pleasing because he looks clean and neat, and shows no evidence of bad habits. Such an appearance is of great importance in selling goods. The printing salesman should look like a business man but not like a fashion plate, and he should radiate success and optimism in his personal appearance.

The language and manner of speaking of the salesman have an effect upon the prospect, influencing him either for or against the proposition he is asked to consider. Salesmen should therefore practice conversational methods that make the right sort of impression. A common fault in many solicitors is a weak-kneed way of talking. They slur their words together, talk too fast, and are careless in their statements. A business man likes to have goods or service presented to him in clear-cut words, definite phrases and positive assertions, and he can be persuaded easier and quicker by this kind of speaking than by any other. It is perhaps needless to say that profanity and slang are out of place in the mouth of the salesman.

Experience and a thorough knowledge of printing are essential to selling success, irrespective of their psychological importance. Some men who are thoroughly familiar with the product hide their knowledge, however, through diffidence or a mistaken idea of their position. A man's knowledge of his goods should radiate from him if he would impress the mind of the man he is trying to sell. He need not appear egotistical, but

should show that he is sure of his ground and that any statements he makes are backed up by the facts and a complete understanding of them. I never knew but one printing salesman who was even moderately successful without a comprehensive knowledge of the goods he was selling, and this one had so strong and pleasing a personality that his "bluff" was seldom called, and he went on getting good orders, with very few of his customers suspecting that he had only a superficial knowledge of printing and prices.

The ability to read the human mind quickly and accurately is a most valuable trait in selling printing. A man's words do not always convey what is passing in his mind, and the expression of the face, movements of the hands, etc., are more clearly indicative of his attitude than what he says. Following the line of least resistance is often an excellent policy to pursue in influencing a man so that he will decide to order. There are many details of a printing job which do not materially affect the cost, and any preference of the customer, whether expressed by word or action, should be acceded to cheerfully by the salesman, if by so doing he does not jeopardize his profits.

The salesman who makes friends easily and keeps his friends is usually more successful than the one whose coldness keeps him from any intimacy with those he calls on. A business friend need not be a close, personal friend, nor a friend of the salesman's family; but

the friendship of business is an important factor in placing orders and should not be overlooked. A friendly spirit, manifested in a readiness to do a favor, is always appreciated, and reciprocity is a great thing in modern business methods. The man who does a business favor to another or helps him to secure an order expects and usually receives something in return. And the printing salesman can secure many an order by little helps of this kind, unobtrusively rendered to his customers and prospects. "Friendship based upon business, not business based upon friendship," is a motto that hung for many years upon the wall in the office of a large New York printing establishment.

The printing salesman should not overlook the importance of being a good listener. He will meet many men who like so well to hear their own voices in conversation that they must burden him with tales of their successes, their importance, their families and their plans for the future. The man who can patiently listen to these often uninteresting things will profit by his quiet attitude and will get orders with little effort in the way of argument. The customer thinks his own opinions are important, and he should be respected to the limit in his belief. A certain amount of self-respect on the part of the salesman is just as necessary, however. The happy medium is to give the customer the benefit of any doubt concerning the relative importance of differing opinions and at the right moment

override his last objection to placing the order by a leading, forceful attitude.

Many a salesman has talked himself out of an order because he did not know when to stop. He presents his proposition and his reasons why he should have the order; he convinces the prospect—and then he keeps on talking, not knowing that he is overstepping the mark. When the prospect has decided to place the order, then is the time to stop talking. Under ordinary circumstances, he will consider the matter settled and need not be further convinced. For this same reason, I dislike to submit more than one proof or more than one sketch, if the sale is a drawing. Each time you present something to the buyer to pass upon, you give him one more opportunity to change his mind and decide against his first judgment.

Good collectors understand the value of silence and present a bill with few words. It is not the work of the collector to sell the work over again or to discuss its merits or demerits.

There is one right time, in closing a sale, that should not be passed over. It is when the prospect indicates in some way that all his objections have been overruled or that he is almost persuaded. Then is the time to present the dotted line of the contract, if the transaction involves a written agreement. If it is a simple printing order, the right remark is something like this: "All right, Mr. Brown; just give me the copy and we will

begin the work at once and show you a proof on Monday." If the details of the job are thoroughly understood by this time, the salesman should close his talk right there and with a pleasant "Good afternoon" or a "Thank you" for the order depart without further delay.

If an order cannot be secured, after the salesman has presented his strongest arguments, backed up by a pleasant and impressive manner of presenting them, a last effort should be made to prevent the prospect from deciding against the house represented. Next to securing the order, is to leave him undecided. Let him understand that the matter is considered to be still open, to be taken up again on another call; and when the salesman calls again, he should have new reasons and interesting new points about the work to talk about. Printing orders cannot always be secured in a single call; usually they cannot, if the job is of considerable importance or involves a large expenditure of money. And there are few other lines of business that can be carried on with the one-call method.

It requires diplomacy in large quantities and well applied to sell goods at a profit to the hard-to-please, the scolding buyer and the chronic faultfinder. A close study of the personality of these difficult customers will often show their weak points, however, and with the ice once broken the pleasanter side often appears and lasting business friendships sometimes result. The

salesman should be careful not to antagonize these difficult buyers unnecessarily; their peculiarities should be respected as far as possible. A man who makes bitter enemies often makes strong friendships, and the man who is high-strung, quick of temper, or naturally irritable, often has a softer side to his nature; if his confidence and good-will can be once secured, it will take more than the arguments of a competitor to take away his business. I have often noticed that the harder the business is to secure, the more desirable it is when once landed. The man who buys anything presented and without consideration of price is often slow in paying his bills and sometimes does not pay them at all.

Opinions differ widely as to the manner in which a salesman should refer, if at all, to competing houses and their work. It is evident, however, that a habit of "knocking" should be discouraged; and the fewer the allusions to a competing plant, the better will be the impression made. The buyer knows that a salesman does not usually have accurate information about competing houses, and he is apt to discount any statement that may be made. It is far better to ignore the existence of competition, if possible, or to press home those arguments in favor of the shop represented, leaving the buyer to think what he will of the rival for the work. There is too much worrying, in the ranks of printers, about the other fellow, and the only concern that a master printer need have for his local or other

rivals is that they know enough about costs in their own plants to refuse to take work excepting at a fair profit.

Psychological methods are entering more and more into the selling of printing. Business efficiency is increasing in the printing industry as well as in other branches of commercial activity, and the study of human nature is becoming more popular than in the days before the advent of cost-finding systems and modern methods of salesmanship and advertising. Good salesmen practice psychology on their customers, whether they recognize it under this name or not, and the salesman who is really ambitious to become a recognized success in his vocation can well afford to give some little time each day or week to the study of how to influence men's minds.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Advertising-Service Department

ONE of the comparatively new means of increasing the business of a printing plant is the advertising-service department, designed to provide a service for business houses in the preparation of the matter and production of their printed advertising.

The idea was born of the remark, often heard in the business office, "This is about what I want, but you fix it up right for me." The customer usually accompanies a statement of this kind with a handful of penciled memoranda, or in some cases illegible, ungrammatical, poorly spelled copy, which he wants to see emerge a highly attractive piece of printed publicity. Such a customer expects a printer to be more than a printer, and he should if possible be accommodated.

There are a few large plants that have for many years furnished an advertising service to their patrons, which included the writing of copy, making of illustrations and engravings, and mailing, as well as the printing and binding necessary to produce printed advertising. It is only recently, however, that the idea has become so general that there is profit for the ordinary or small shop in providing a service of this kind; and it has been proved in many such instances

that an advertising-service department, covering all these branches of advertising work, and often other details connected with the placing of publicity in the hands of the prospect, can be handled to advantage by almost any printer who knows what is required.

An advertising-service department makes it possible for a printer to add to his business and to his profits without investing in more machinery or other equipment. If he has no one about the office who can write advertising copy, this part of the work can be turned over to an outside copy writer. The art work and engravings can be sent out, as they ordinarily would be, and the rest of the work can be done in the plant. It is also practical to compile and furnish mailing lists to be used in mailing the advertising.

The prime requisite for the successful carrying out of a service department is a salesman who can talk intelligently and convincingly to prospective patrons of the department, and who is able to show them the advantages of ordering from one house all the details connected with a direct mailing campaign. This is one of the best talking points for business, and one that can be presented in a most favorable light. The salesman should endeavor to secure the order for all or as much of the work as he can secure, and it will be found best to quote a single price, covering all of the service to be performed rather than to submit a detailed bid, with separate prices for copy writing,

cuts, printing, etc. Copy writers usually secure fairly good prices for their work, and, starting with a liberal estimate for the copy, and suggestive advice which should accompany it, the drawings, halftone or other plates, electrotypes, printing, binding, inclosing and mailing may each be added and the total price given as the quotation.

If any printer doubts the practicability of an advertising-service department, he need only talk the matter over with a few aggressive business men to find that such a service will be welcomed by them. Many successful heads of big businesses have expressed themselves in this way, for even the best of them find themselves short of ideas at times.

When a printer once decides that an advertising-service department will be an excellent adjunct to his business, he should plan an advertising campaign to let the public know that he has such a service to offer. This advertising can be done in many ways. Pages describing the merits of this plan of buying advertising matter can be run frequently in the house-organ, if one is published, or form letters and folders may be sent to a select list of prospective patrons of such a service. Such a mailing list should include the names and addresses of business firms known to use printed advertising liberally, and of new firms, manufacturers, wholesalers and retail dealers who conduct direct-advertising campaigns. All such advertising is valuable

principally to induce inquiries, as it would be unreasonable to expect orders direct without explaining more fully the plan of providing a complete service. These inquiries should be followed up promptly with a personal call by the salesman or a personal letter. If the salesman is also the copy writer or understands something of advertising, he should be able to turn a good percentage of the inquiries into orders by showing the prospect how good advertising results may be secured by combining the customer's intimate knowledge of his own goods with the advertising experience of the copy writer.

The following advertising copy, which was used by a large western printing house in announcing an advertising-service department, illustrates how the various points of the service may be explained and made to appeal to the reader:

WE HAVE JUST OPENED OUR NEW
ADVERTISING-SERVICE DEPARTMENT

for the convenience and assistance of our customers in carrying out their advertising plans.

The work of this department covers the whole range of printed advertising and is designed to relieve business men of most of the detail work, enabling them to carry out a campaign at a great saving of time and effort.

We will attend, through this new service department, to every detail of the work necessary in the preparation and mailing of printed advertising.

We suggest plans and originate advertising ideas.

We write the copy and suggest the form in which it should be printed.

We furnish illustrations and cuts of every kind.

We read the proofs and do the printing.

We inclose the printed matter in envelopes and mail it, when desired.

Isn't it much more convenient and a great saving of time for you to place your order for all these things with one reliable house, rather than to have perhaps a half-dozen firms each do a part of the work?

Suppose, for instance, that you wish to reach a thousand or ten thousand prospective buyers with a catalog, booklet or folder describing your line. By placing your order through our advertising-service department, we will go over the proposition thoroughly with you from an advertising standpoint, suggesting the paper, type, illustrations, and style of copy likely to be most productive of results. We then write the copy in strong, forceful English, combining your knowledge of your own goods with our advertising experience. When this copy is approved by you, we print the booklet or folder, reading the proofs and guarding against possible errors by close oversight, supplying such drawings, halftone cuts, zinc etchings or electrotypes as may be needed. We print the envelopes and inclose the booklets, also mail them for you if desired.

For all this service we charge you one price, covering all the items of the service and advice indicated.

Phone Main 4200, and ask for the advertising-service department, and our representative will call on you; or address a letter to the department and it will receive prompt attention with a comprehensive reply covering any points you may wish to be informed on.

Try this new service in connection with your printed advertising, and you will recognize at once how convenient, economical and satisfactory such a plan is.

Many different kinds of printed advertising can be handled through the advertising-service department. Catalogs may be compiled, printed and mailed; fancy

announcements designed and printed; folders and circulars written, illustrated and printed; newspaper advertisements written, set in type and electrotypes made; form letters written and printed, and numerous envelope orders secured for inclosing the advertising.

Stress should be laid on the fact that the customer is relieved of much of the detail work incident to placing orders with several firms, and also on the advantages of the service in reading proofs, guarding against errors, etc. It can be explained that the customer need not read the proofs because the service takes the responsibility for this work. Buyers of printing know that printers are presumed to have proof-readers, but the assurance of a little extra attention is usually appreciated.

There are firms that have developed the advertising-service department into the most important part of their business. Most of the printing orders come through this department, and good prices are secured because there is not so much competition as in straight printing. The public seems to realize that there is a real advantage and benefit in the plan.

Direct-advertising methods may be applied to securing orders for the advertising department, and form letters and folders or booklets may be used to familiarize the prospect with all the angles of the service offered. Such advertising should be consis-

tently followed up at frequent intervals, for the proposition is big enough to merit patience and the expenditure of gray matter.

I believe that new firms, or those in which there has been a change of personnel or of location, are usually easier to interest in a new proposition than older or well-established houses. The following letter is one that has been successfully used to attract the attention of business men of this class. Replies received to such a letter may be developed into business for the advertising-service department if followed up with a personal call by a forceful representative with some knowledge of advertising.

PROFITABLE ADVERTISING FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Every business must have advertising of some kind, and it is particularly necessary for a new company or when there is a change of firm.

Whatever your advertising plans may be, I can help you in carrying them out, whether the work is a prospectus or booklet, a series of business letters, newspaper advertisements, drawings or cuts, circulars, folders, or merely a piece of printing incorporating some clever, catchy idea to let the public know you are in business.

Let me show you what I can do.

I will study the goods or service you have to sell from the standpoint of the people you want to reach, and will then write you one advertisement putting into it all the convincing, selling power I am able. This advertisement must satisfy you or there will be no charge. And it will. I don't know your business better than you do yourself, but if I can't show you something helpful about the advertising of your business, the loss is mine, and I'll take all the chances.

I work *with* my patrons as well as for them, and I have been successful because this plan of combining your intimate knowledge of your own business with my advertising experience can hardly fail to produce good advertising.

Phone me today—Main 5046—and I will call.

Investigate this proposition. It is as fair as I can make it. My rates are reasonable, and you will find that you need not spend much money to have attractive, pulling advertising. Select any kind of advertising that seems best and I will help you get the best possible results from the amount expended.

In the common interest of your business, and mine, *phone me today.*

YOUR ADVERTISING ADVISOR.

CHAPTER NINE

Is a House-Organ Good Advertising?

THE booklet, magazine-like in form, called the house-organ is one of the comparatively new developments in advertising. It has been used in advertising almost every line of merchandise from fashion patterns to printing, and its use varies from the publication that is distributed only among employees or agents of the business concern that issues it, to the house-organ that is mailed to the general public.

House-organ advertising is a rather important form of publicity in the printing trade. Many plants use this kind of advertising, in large cities and small towns. Some printers who have established house-organs have discontinued them because they did not pay. Others have changed the form of their publications several times. And their contents vary from a booklet that resembles rather closely a small monthly magazine to others that look more like advertising folders or booklets. The house-organ has been condemned and praised by those who have used it. New house-organs are continually making their bids for patronage, taking the places of those that are discontinued. The entire question of the value of this sort of advertising, as compared with results from the same

expenditure of money and effort in some other way, seems to be an unsettled problem.

The reason for the great diversity of opinion regarding the value of a house-organ as an important part of the advertising of a printing business probably lies in the fact that it is a form of publicity that is still in its infancy. If there are great principles or rules which govern the house-organ and upon which depends its success or failure, these basic principles are not generally understood by the trade. The master printers or editors who are responsible for the house-organs seem to produce publications without as much regard for the opinions of the readers as they should give. Too often a house-organ is a source of personal pride to its editor, but does not give sufficient tangible returns in the shape of profitable orders.

The editorial policy of that eminently successful man in his field, S. S. McClure, would seem to be a much better one to follow. Mr. McClure is credited with saying that his one viewpoint in his editorial capacity has ever been to produce a magazine containing the kind of matter that he thought his readers would most appreciate and enjoy. It requires a man of unusual ability to edit a magazine from the standpoint of pleasing himself and then have it please his readers equally well. This has been done in some instances, but the plan is not the safe one to follow in house-organ work.

Direct advertising is a proved success, and the house-organ would seem to be one of the highest types of this printed advertising. To realize the success which seems possible, it is necessary, therefore, to separate the good from the bad and thus get a definite idea of the things which are essential to make a house-organ profitable advertising, eliminating the objectionable features that detract from rather than add to the result aimed for.

First of all, a house-organ, to be good advertising, must be so fresh and attractive and interesting that it will not reach the wastebasket until every one in the office or house, to whom it is directed, has read it. It should be more comprehensive than the ordinary folder or booklet, and the advertising copy it contains should be of such nature that the reader who buys printing will read it because of the information or suggestions offered. The style of this copy should be as far removed as possible from the old printers' advertising, which used to read, "Cylinder Press & Co., Printers and Binders. Estimates cheerfully furnished." The house-organ advertisement must tell an interesting story about the plant or about a certain kind of work. It should carry information not usually found in printers' advertising, and should be designed to show that the firm issuing the house-organ knows something about the use of printing as well as its production. Such subjects as "Advertising campaigns," "Turning

color into sales," "The right paper for your catalog," "How the printed folder sells goods," and many others along similar lines, can be discussed in a way that will make the advertising manager of a business house glad to read them.

Excellent results have been secured in the printing trade, as well as in others, by publishing in the house-organ information similar to that in the technical trade publications. You know that advertising men and the managers of big business enterprises like to read such publications as *The American Printer* and other trade papers because the articles often are pertinent to their own advertising. Such descriptive articles about printing, advertising and selling, in a house-organ, have a semi-news value and tend to link up the parts of the organ, which are frank advertisements of the work or departments of the plant.

There is one thing that has been thoroughly proved in connection with house-organ publishing, and that is that the publication will not run itself, nor can it succeed if it is merely the by-product of the manager or some other person who edits the house-organ in his spare moments as a sort of adjunct to his other work. The entire responsibility for the success of the organ should be in the hands of one competent man. He should certainly have the coöperation and help of the manager and of every employee who can contribute to the value of the publication, but there must be a well-de-

financed policy, based on experience or observation, and this policy should be carried out by the editor or one in charge giving unstinted time and consideration to the subject and to the consistent expenditure of the money required. The house-organ that bears all the marks of stinginess in its production cannot hope to succeed, and when it fails another printer will say, "House-organ advertising is no good; I have tried it."

I was recently interested in two instances of house-organ changes that came under my observation. An eastern house wrote me: "We have discontinued our general house-organ and we are now circulating a small monthly. You might call it a house-organ, but it has no editorial matter, and nothing but cuts, descriptions and prices." The other firm was a western one that had published a house-organ for several years and had gotten results. This house discontinued the house-organ but at once sent out another booklet, under a different name, which was projected to be published monthly and to have even a larger complimentary circulation than had the old house-organ.

The peculiar thing about both these cases to me was that both firms were under the impression that they were discontinuing their house-organs, while to me it seemed that both had just begun to find out what kind of organ was best suited to their use.

The experience of publishing a house-organ without first investigating the subject thoroughly is an expen-

sive one. Much the better plan is for the printer to get in touch with other printers who are using house-organs, to get copies of as many of these publications as he can, and then to study the subject in the light of the experience of others, so that he may profit by their mistakes and benefit from those plans or policies that have been proved successful.

I know of a house-organ that failed chiefly because the same cover design, in the same colors, was used month after month. Persons receiving it thought that it was merely another copy of the same advertising booklet they had seen before, and they passed it on to the wastebasket after the slightest glance. Admitting that the cover should have some sort of decorated design, and is most pleasing when printed in two or more colors, it still remains to have the cover make just the sort of impression that is desired. It must whet the mental appetite of the observer so that he will look inside at once or keep the booklet for future reading. My own idea of the ideal house-organ cover is one that, while it retains the name of the publication, and perhaps the firm issuing it, in similar form in each issue, attracts attention because of the novelty or striking appearance of the design. Different colors of ink also help to give a fresh and original appearance. Then if the house-organ is good enough to fulfill its purpose the first time, the second and subsequent issues will be read with an avidity resulting from a recollection of

the pleasure or information gained from perusing the previous copies.

The house-organ seems a particularly suitable medium for advertising the service department of a printing business that renders assistance to business houses in the preparation of their printed advertising, and for covering, besides the actual printing orders, such things as supplying the drawings and other illustrations, the halftones and electrotypes, writing the copy, compiling or arranging the matter, suggesting the color scheme and the kinds of papers suited to the job, inclosing the printed matter in the envelopes, addressing it and doing the mailing. All these things and many others can often be handled by a printer who makes it known that he will help his customers to get satisfactory results from their printed advertising by doing more than is ordinarily expected of a printer. There are house-organs in which the advertising-service department occupies most of the space, and results seem to justify this policy.

A printer should always remember that his house-organ is not only an advertisement of his business, but is also a sample of his work. His ability to produce a pleasing and harmonious piece of printed advertising by a combination of paper, ink and type should be shown in every issue of the house-organ, for by this is he judged.

I am a firm believer in the selling value of illustra-

tions, and I believe that the house-organ should be well illustrated, not with stock cuts, unless they are good, but with drawings or with photographic reproductions made especially for this use. Pictures add to the value of any printed advertising, and in this case the ability of the firm represented to handle halftone printing and other cut work can be shown and proved.

Many of the house-organs contain pages of humorous matter, short stories and jokes, and while these do perhaps add to the interest in the publication, they are, I believe, secondary in importance to articles which may be of practical usefulness to the reader in his own business.

The mailing list of a house-organ should be given careful attention or the best will fail in accomplishing what is desired. In the first place, the list must be well selected, and then kept up to its original standing by a continual checking up to remove names of persons who show no interest after a reasonable period of time—six months or more; and new names should be added to replace those removed. It is worth considerable attention, and the time spent in keeping the list fresh will be well employed.

The opinions of readers should be frequently asked on points connected with the policy of the house-organ, and the "Personal Talks with the Editor," which are common in several of the regular monthlies, might well be adapted to the house-organ, devoting a page or

half-page of each issue to this purpose. While editing a house-organ of large circulation, I frequently received excellent suggestions in the contributions to its columns from the readers. Some of these came unsolicited, and others were the result of frequent invitations to them to express their likes and dislikes.

The copy that goes into the house-organ is of prime importance. It is worth paying well for, and should be passed upon by the editor just as the editors of the great monthlies and weeklies pass upon the manuscripts submitted to them. The house-organ should not appear to be entirely the work of one writer, even though most or all of the copy is written by the same person. He can diversify his style to give variety, or articles by others may be borrowed or purchased for use in the organ.

It is not necessary to suggest any particular size for the publication. This is best left to the individual publishers. The size of the page is immaterial, but the booklet should not be so small as to defeat the idea of its being a regular publication, and should not be so large as to make the cost out of proportion to the results. A little observation and experience will show what size is best.

Properly handled, I believe that the house-organ fills a very important part in the advertising of the printer.

CHAPTER TEN

Selling Printing by Mail

THAT printing can be successfully sold by mail is proved by the experience of successful firms who use the mails, either wholly or in part, in securing orders. No printer need doubt the efficacy of printed advertising as a means of promoting his own business, and there is no phase of the work which cannot be handled by means of correspondence and printed matter, with the help of dummies and samples to convey illustrations of ideas from the printer to the prospective customer.

There are perhaps few printers in the general line who conduct an exclusive mail-order business, but there are many whose mail orders form a very important part of the year's business, and several specialty printers depend almost entirely for their output upon orders received by mail from persons whom they may never see.

In a business in which close attention to detail is always important, accuracy and a comprehensive consideration for every detail become absolutely essential in handling mail orders, and for this reason personal experience, or a study of the experiences of others, is of great help in successfully carrying on a mail-order department or business. Misunderstandings must be

avoided if possible, clear business letters must be written, and the views of the buyer must be obtained as plainly as possible. Proofs that require but little explanation should be submitted, and extra attention must be given to the details of packing and shipping so that the goods will arrive on time and in good condition.

Taking up some of the difficulties of handling the orders of the unseen buyer somewhat in the order they are most likely to occur, the first indication of a prospective mail order is usually a brief inquiry for prices on a job. The applicant may give only half the information the printer would like to have; there are a hundred questions he would like to ask his correspondent about the job and a hundred more details he would like to know. Lacking this information, he must answer the letter promptly and in a way that will at least bring another letter. If the inquiry is so lacking in information that a quotation is impossible, the reply should state that an estimate will be made promptly upon the receipt of the required information. In most cases, however, it is better to plunge at once into the business of securing the order. A price on the job indicated may be quoted, and this should be accompanied by a dummy, samples of paper or typography, a layout perhaps, and anything else that will tend to make the meaning clear. The quotation should be specific, a bid on the kind of job the printer has in mind, and suffi-

ciently clear to the prospect to make him either accept the price and specifications or state definitely in his reply wherein the specifications do not suit him. The printer must be exact and put the matter up to the customer *in* a way that will make him reply in a definite manner.

The spirit of this early correspondence should be confidence; it should infer that the printer has been selected to do the job, and that the inquiry is made in good faith with the intention of placing the order. No mention should be made of competition on the work, but the effort should be made to make the reader see that this particular printer is undoubtedly the one who should do this work.

A service that every buyer of printing must appreciate is the furnishing of a dummy and layout of a job, and the care used in making such a representation of the finished job has often secured an order that would otherwise have gone to a competitor. This is particularly true in handling mail orders and inquiries.

The effort and expense of making dummies are sometimes considered as out of proportion to their value, but the salesman who can show a prospective customer just how his job will look has a tremendous advantage over the solicitor who depends entirely upon exciting the patron's imagination by either spoken or written word.

The best kind of dummy is the one that most nearly

approaches the finished job. It should not misrepresent the kind of printing that will be done on the job, and it need not do so to be effective. There are many ways to make a dummy and layout attractive. If the job is a booklet, for instance, the following plan might be adopted:

Select the paper for cover and contents that seems most suitable or most likely to impress the prospect favorably. Fold and bind one book with the correct number of blank pages and then proceed to make the cover, title-page and a few other pages approximate, in appearance, your idea of the finished job. This may be done by setting the cover-page and perhaps other pages in the style of type to be used, or it may be accomplished by cutting printed illustrations, ornaments, borders and lines of type from other booklets and pasting them in their proper places. A little drawing with a pen or brush in the proper colors may be done if it is to be finished neatly. If clippings from other booklets are used, this use should be explained and the prospect made to understand that it is the general effect that is shown him, and that the illustrations may be foreign to the subjects of his own, but similar in colors or style or the nature of the cuts. You may go a step further and inclose the dummy in a suitable envelope. The salesman who goes to a prospect fully prepared with a neat and attractive dummy and layout and an intelligent quotation, with a price not

far from competing bids, will receive more consideration than the solicitor who submits no dummy, and the implied service, shown by the dummy, will often secure an order, even at a higher price. In soliciting orders by mail, the letter is the salesman, and the dummy is even more important.

The work of the printer in securing business by mail should not be limited to a single letter quoting prices. Even though no reply is received to the quotation, the prospect should be written to and asked if the order has been placed, or if there is anything in connection with the job that was not sufficiently clear in the previous correspondence. Such a letter will usually bring a reply. Then, if the order has been placed elsewhere, the printer may acknowledge this letter, regretting the circumstances which prevented him from doing the work and asking for consideration on the next printing order.

When a mail order is received, it should be acknowledged promptly, stating about when proofs will be mailed or the work shipped. This is essential, even though the customer does not ask for delivery on a specified date, because it makes him feel better satisfied from the start, and it may save a complaint a few days or weeks later because the job has not been delivered. If there is any detail of the order not perfectly clear, the acknowledgment letter should call special attention to this discrepancy and state the matter as the

printer intends to handle it. Then the customer will, of necessity, correct the misunderstanding if there be one. It puts the onus on him and absolves the printer from claims for errors.

When the proof is sent out, it should be accompanied by a letter, explaining any point not absolutely clear in the proof itself. The buyer should be asked to read and return the proof promptly, and a calendar memorandum should be kept of the date the proof is expected back. If it is not received by that date, another letter should be written asking why the proof has not been returned.

When the job is done, it should be wrapped in packages of convenient size and packed securely for shipping. On the day the job is shipped an invoice should be mailed, usually accompanied by a sample of the work, particularly if the goods are sent by freight.

The same rules for extending credit on printing to local buyers should prevail in handling mail orders. If the buyer is not well rated by the commercial credit agencies, references or a cash deposit should be asked for before the work is begun and as soon as the order is received. And on a first order, the printer's terms of payment should be plainly stated so that there may be no misunderstanding as to when the work is to be paid for or the balance of the payment made.

With these suggestions on the handling of mail orders, there remains perhaps the most important phase

of the question—how to get inquiries and new customers, and how to retain the business of patrons after the first order has been secured. Inquiries may be gotten in several ways—by advertising in newspapers, trade journals or magazines, by a direct-mailing campaign to prospective buyers in the form of house-organs, form letters and other printed matter, or by a combination of traveling salesmen and direct mailing.

The method most popular with the ordinary printer is the direct-advertising route, and this can be made successful if conducted in the right way. A definite plan is the first requisite. It should early be decided just what sort of printing will be solicited by mail, and the kind of printing decided on should certainly be work that can be handled to advantage without sending much or any of it out to another shop to be done. Then a mailing list of prospective buyers of this particular kind of printing should be compiled. This can be done from city or state directories, from a careful reading of trade journals and newspapers in the territory covered, and often with the help of friends or business acquaintances who may be familiar with the territory. There should be a really good reason for putting a name on the list, and this reason should be, "This man or firm uses the kind of printing I am doing and is therefore a prospective customer." A mailing list need not be large at the start, but it should be accurate.

The next step is to plan a campaign of advertising covering several months or a year. The prospect should be bombarded at regular intervals with printed matter, form letters, folders, samples of work, etc., to arouse his attention and his interest. The house-organ should be sent to him as often as published, and in the letters and other matter sent the idea should be foremost in mind that something new must be presented each time. New arguments, new samples, new reasons why it is to the prospect's interest to place a trial order, should be used. The same old matter will not answer the purpose, for it may be that the prospect is reading the advertising sent, but has not been convinced of the merits of the work or service offered.

Since much of the printing that will be solicited comes under the head of printed advertising, the benefits of direct advertising should be suggested and impressed upon the reader and the experience or facilities of the printer for handling this particular kind of work made attractive and plain. The advertising of several of the paper houses along this line can be drawn on, for their arguments are good and the matter usually well written. Cut prices need not be referred to, but quality, accuracy and attention to details are considerations that appeal to nearly every buyer of printing. The matter of freight and express rates should be made clear. If the printer expects the buyer to pay the delivery charges, the rates should be given,

if possible, and some pertinent reference made to the ratio which these rates bear to the prices of the printing, if such a reference is not unfavorable. If the printer intends to prepay the delivery charges, a custom which is practical chiefly on small work, this fact should be featured in every piece of advertising sent out. We all remember the advertising slogan, "Jones pays the freight," and the value of such a statement has not outlived its usefulness, as I can testify from personal experience in carrying on a mail-order printing business. Having a plant a hundred miles from two large cities, I built up a successful business with large manufacturers and jobbers in these cities by a combination of the direct-advertising methods outlined with personal solicitation in a weekly trip, calling on customers and prospective ones. The freight rate was twenty-five cents per hundred pounds, and when you consider the average value of one hundred pounds of printed matter, it is clear that prepaying the freight was not a very important item in the cost of the work.

When numerous customers have been secured by mail, personal letters can take the place of the form letters, and the business, which will probably be only a small part of the printing purchases at first, can be increased by giving satisfactory work and service at satisfactory prices. If a certain job is found to be ordered at regular intervals, the attention of the customer can be called to the job just before it is usually

ordered to prevent the order going to some one else through error or carelessness. Any suggestions that may make the customer's printing more effective or the service more satisfactory can be presented with expectations of a hearing, and when a part of the printing orders has been secured from a new customer, it is not difficult to increase the purchases.

In some respects mail orders for printing are more desirable than local ones, and every printer should have a mail-order department even if it is limited to the work of one man part of each week. The time spent can be made profitable, and soliciting printing by mail is often freer from competition than other lines of endeavor.

Difficulties That Bother the Estimator

ESTIMATING is so closely allied to the advertising and selling departments of the printing business that a monograph on estimating would hardly be complete without some reference to the computing of costs and making of prices on work. It is my object to consider here some of the problems that frequently make the estimator's position unpleasant and to suggest some ways of meeting them with credit and profit to his firm.

The man who sells the goods is about the most important man about a printing plant, but the man who makes the estimate and prices is a close second, and when both branches of work are combined in one man, he has more responsibility than any other employee of the plant. The profits or losses of the business rest, first of all, in his hands, and if his figures are not accurate no amount of work in the factory can overcome the damage he may do the business. Conversely, the success of the business can be promoted most effectively by the skilful work of a competent estimator.

The estimator should do more than estimate the probable cost of orders, however. He should be an inspector of the work that passes through the plant daily, inspecting the work of the various departments

and keeping constant watch on the time required on different orders. He should always be alert to discover waste of time or material, and be quick to suggest improved methods that will economize hours or stock. Such a man becomes an efficiency engineer of the highest type, and his value to a firm can only be estimated by considering the size of the plant or the volume of business which he is capable of overseeing in these ways.

Taking up now some of the knotty problems that daily present themselves for solution to the estimator in the shop of medium or large size, I wish to suggest some methods by which an exact or accurate estimate may be arrived at on uncommon work or work done for the customer who is unreasonable or exacting.

The job that is out of the ordinary run of work is always difficult to estimate. The estimator wants to make a safe figure, and he also wants to get the order; but he cannot recollect handling an exactly similar job before, or has no records to base his estimate on. The result may often be attained, however, by dissecting the job into its integral parts. In estimating a large sheet of tabular work, for instance, a good plan is to consider a small section of the form as the unit, estimating the probable time required for its composition carefully. It is then easy to multiply this time by the number of units into which it is divided.

Estimators are prone to figure too low on work that

requires careful register. The registering of plates or forms for two or more colors seems a very simple matter in the aggregate, but I have seen cases where it was necessary to abandon the entire color scheme of a job because the forms could not be made to register without electrotyping the pages of the booklet. In estimating on color work, the "squeeze" of a form should always be considered, and in the case of a sixteen-page book form, this is enough to spoil the register of a border, running in one color, with an outline around this border, in another. Electrotypes will reduce the amount of variation, but the additional cost of these plates is sometimes an important item in the cost of the job.

In estimating a job requiring many halftone or other plates, furnished by the customer, the item of making these plates type-high, and perhaps doing other work to make them usable, must be allowed for in the estimate. The customary requirement that the customer provide good plates will not always be sufficient protection to the printer against faulty plates, and the safe way is to see the plates and to allow time for putting them in good condition.

The little item of cutting stock is one that eats a big hole in the profits of a firm if not accounted for in the estimates. Before the advent of the cost system, little attention was paid to stock cutting, but modern methods show that more time is required to trim a ream

of paper or to cut the stock for a job than **was usually** believed. The time of stock cutters should be recorded accurately and estimates based on the records.

The matter of overtime is something that means a loss to the plant unless the estimator adds the extra cost to quoted prices ; and where a job must be done either wholly or partly at night or on Sundays, the best plan seems to be to have a complete understanding with the customer as to the price of the work and the fact that it must be done outside of the regular working hours. I know a large and successful plant with a high reputation for keeping its promises of delivery which has a rule that a job must be done on time, regardless of the amount of overtime required. But, as a competitor of this firm remarked to me, "They charge enough for their work so they can do it all in overtime if necessary." There are few shops, however, able to get overtime prices for regular day work, so that the policy of this plant is hardly a safe or practical one to follow for the ordinary master printer.

That trait of human nature which makes one man take twice as long to do a certain job as another man, under the same outward conditions, is always a stumbling block in the way of estimating. There are two ways in which this obstacle may be met. One is by getting the average time or speed of all the men doing the same kind of work and using the average in estimating ; the other is to use the probable time of an individual

worker and then make sure that the particular job is given to this man to do. The first suggestion is undoubtedly best, but the second is practical on certain occasions, as in the face of extra strong competition, where an especially accurate cost estimate is desired.

An estimator should accustom himself to relying on his own judgment, but the help or suggestions of foremen and other employees should not be despised. There is a peculiar thing in connection with consulting with shop employees as to the probable time required to do a certain job, and I have often wondered if my own experience coincides with that of other estimators. I have found that a foreman or compositor or pressman will usually underestimate the time required on a job, when his opinion is asked, particularly if he gets the idea that a very close estimate is being made.

One of the best protections against errors in estimating is a cost or price book, kept up by the estimator for his own guidance. Every page of such a book should be compiled by himself, and, by arranging various kinds of work under headings, alphabetically indexed, the contents will be easy to refer to. Such a book should contain all sorts of classified information. A copy of the cost record of an unusual job; the amount of ink used on a long run; the bindery time for an odd job of stitching or folding; the actual speed of the various presses, taking the average of their production for a month; the time required for proofreading a

certain book ; figures showing the cost of the composition of some intricate job ; the cost of slipsheeting ; the freight on paper stock from the mills, and thousands of other items, should find their proper places in the cost book. Such a book should be added to almost daily, and this frequent work and more frequent referring to the book in making estimates will soon make its pages so familiar that the estimator will almost unconsciously memorize much of the information and will be able to turn to any item or table without hunting for it.

I know of no better help to an estimator than the right kind of cost book. It is far more reliable and helpful than the published price books, of which there are a number on the market. These price books are valuable, but should be used as a guide for comparisons, in quoting approximate prices or where there is not time to make a detailed estimate. The figures usually given in these books are averages, and do not represent the exact costs of any particular plant. I believe that every estimator should have one or more of these books and should use them as suggested, for checking up his own figures or for quoting prices quickly.

Estimating the time of composition is usually recognized as the hardest part of the estimator's work. Personally, I have not found this true in my own experience, but many men have more trouble in getting correct estimates of time in the composing-room than in any other department. There are many things that

make it difficult to estimate composition, particularly handwork. The amount and kind of equipment, the way in which material is cared for and distributed, the make-up and other handling of the type after it is set, and many other things, enter into the composition cost, and it is these things, with others, that make it hard to estimate time in this department. Experience and a constant watchfulness over the cost sheets will do more than any other two things to make an estimator proficient in correctly gaging the cost of composition.

In the pressroom, the records of the various presses are also most valuable helps in arriving at the cost of odd runs, and the conscientious estimator need have no feeling that it is a confession of weakness frequently to consult the production records of the past in making his predictions for the future. Accuracy is the one essential thing in estimating the cost of printing. It takes precedence over every other consideration. To be accurate is more important than to be rapid, and speedy conclusions are too apt to be erroneous.

In my own experience in estimating printing, I have found that the checking over of the items of an estimate is one of the surest ways to avoid errors of omission and mistakes of any kind. Every figure and extension and total should be verified, and the items should be checked to see if any part of the work involved in the delivery of the job has been overlooked. After this has been done, the estimator can well take a compre-

hensive view of his work, looking at the resulting cost and price from the standpoint of the customer and in the light of the probable competition on the job. Such a view of an estimate is something like the habit of the artist, who, after working closely on a drawing for some time, will step back to view the effect in a general way without so much attention to details. The price per thousand should be considered as well as the total amount; the purpose or use of the printing may also be considered to see if the quoted price will be within the reasonable limits beyond which the customer will presumably not go to accomplish the result desired. The kind of job wanted is also important, and in this case I mean the character of the work wanted, which can be designated by the terms "fancy job," "cheap job," "fair job," "quick job," "perfect work," etc. Every printer knows what these terms mean, and it is usually not hard to get an expression from a prospective customer as to the kind of work he expects. The estimate should conform to the patron's expectations.

The hard-to-please customer; the buyer who thinks he knows more about printing than any printer; the exacting, picayunish purchaser who thinks more of unimportant details than of the general result, and the careless buyer, may all be classified as offering conditions that the estimator must meet and overcome, or be overcome by, almost daily. And it should add to the zest and interest of the work that human nature is not

always the same, and that each prospective buyer for whom an estimate is made differs in one or perhaps many particulars from every other. The estimator has a dual duty to perform in most cases. He must cover the cost of unnecessary changes of the faultfinder and at the same time preserve dignity and his temper if he comes in personal contact with such a customer. He must in some way supply the deficient details of information he needs to make an estimate for the careless buyer so definite that there shall be no further chance for misunderstandings. And he must be broad-minded enough to overlook the annoying petulances of the man who sees things through the small end of the glass.

The duties of an estimator should not end with arriving at the probable cost of a job or with quoting the price. If the order is secured, he should make it his interest to see that the job is run through the factory in the way that he estimated it would be done, provided he cannot make himself still more valuable to his firm by devising some way in which the cost can be cut without interfering with the quality of the product or the promised time of delivery. Heads of departments should frequently be consulted as to the best methods of handling the job at the particular time it will be done. And this suggests that it is often expedient to run a job through the plant in a different way than was intended. For instance, a small form may be estimated to be run on a platen press at the shop cost of

this kind of work. When the order comes in every platen press may be operating on long runs, perhaps very profitable ones. But the pony cylinder or a larger cylinder has no form ready, although the pressman is putting in full time on the pay roll. Under such conditions, it would be good judgment to run the small form on the cylinder press, and while the cost of presswork would exceed the estimate, the actual profit on the job, considered in connection with the other work in the shop at the same time, would not be affected. By this I mean that, while the cost record on the job might show a decreased profit (perhaps a loss), this apparent loss of profits would never appear in any other way and the bank balance would not be injuriously affected by the arrangement.

There is so much of the inside workings of the plant that come under the eye of an estimator with enterprise that he can easily make himself the most valuable man in the office, one whose opinion is frequently consulted and highly regarded, and whose salary must, in time, mount to satisfactory proportions. I see a great future for young men who will study estimating as it should be studied, and who will aim at the highest branches of a service in which only the fit can survive.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Credits, Allowances, Adjusting Claims

THE questions of extending credit, making allowances and adjusting claims are closely associated with the problems of selling, and they are all hard ones for most printers. Technically speaking, they come under the general head of business management, and as such are common to every line of trade; but in the printing industry, with very small margins and the extra hazards of manufacturing a product to order for each customer, they seem particularly difficult of solution. To ignore these difficulties, in place of meeting them, is almost fatal to success; and many failures in the printing trade may be traced back to a poor method of handling them.

Taking them up in the order in which they naturally arise, the first is the problem of extending credit to customers. The credit department of many plants is more noticeable by reason of its absence than for the good that it accomplishes. Only a few of the larger plants of the country can boast of a credit man whose sole business it is to pass on the credit of every patron. In the others the little work that is done under this head is made a part of the duties of the bookkeeper, manager, or perhaps a salesman. It is therefore not strange that hundreds of thousands of dollars in prof-

its are lost to the trade every year through failure to collect for the work done. Every printer has a long string of poor or doubtful accounts on his books, which he may carry forward as assets, but which in reality are not worth five cents on the dollar. They are the result of extending credit to persons who are not entitled to it.

It is quite a common thing for a stranger who has never before been a patron to order printing to the extent of twenty-five or fifty dollars, giving the most careful directions as to how he wishes the work done, and then to leave the office without mentioning how or when he expects to pay for it; and it is almost as customary for the printer or salesman to let him do this, trusting more to good luck than to anything else that the job will be paid for when finished. Business in other lines is not conducted in this way. The first thing the clerk in the department store asks, when taking an order, is, "Cash or charge?" If the customer replies "Charge," there is some delay until the credit can be passed on at the office. Grocers who do a credit business are commonly supposed to have heavy losses because of non-payment of bills, but we must at least give the grocers credit for learning something about the person who asks for credit, and the losses, when they occur, can be laid to poor judgment in extending the credit, rather than to ignoring the matter of credit entirely, as is so common in the printing trade. Every

time a printer allows a stranger to order work without a definite understanding as to when and how it is to be paid for, he is taking desperate chances, and he is also injuring the entire trade by thus encouraging so slipshod a method of buying.

It is recognized as a custom of the trade that unknown persons must make a cash deposit when leaving an order for printing, the amount of this deposit varying from a fourth to half the total amount. This custom is not enforced, however, as it should be. The printer fears he will offend, or he is so busy that he does not take the time necessary, or he carelessly forgets to mention the deposit. The regrets always come too late for any good except as a warning to act differently the next time a stranger orders printing and omits to mention the payment. The terms of printing should be "Net cash." Printing is a manufacturing business, and manufacturers are accustomed to make their own terms. The "two per cent, ten days" terms do not apply in buying all manufactured goods, although they are fairly common in retail merchandising. If local conditions seem to necessitate giving this discount, the printer should not extend it to apply to two-per-cent discount for payment on the tenth of the month following for goods bought during the previous month, as this in many cases would in reality discount bills for goods purchased thirty or forty days previously.

To patrons who are entitled to credit, statements should be rendered promptly on the first of each month, covering the purchases of the previous month; the itemized statement has been found most suitable to the handling of accounts for printing.

Bills should also be carefully itemized, and where there are extra charges for alterations, changes from copy, overtime, or for any other item, they should be plainly shown. I filled a position at one time with a large house, which position I styled that of "trouble man or fixer." A part of my duties was to adjust the claims for allowances and discounts of customers who were holding up the payment of their accounts until these claims were adjusted. One of the frequent causes of trouble was the carelessness of the bookkeeper in itemizing the charges for extras on bills. Even though these charges might be carefully itemized on the charge sheet or job ticket, from which the billing was made, the quoted price and the charge for extras would be totaled and entered as one item on the bill by the clerk in charge of this work. This made it appear to the customer that the house was trying to charge him a higher price than quoted for his work without offering any explanation. Much of this trouble could have been avoided by a more careful billing of the accounts.

While the printer should certainly be paid for any extra service rendered in connection with filling an order, such as changes from the original specifications,

additional copy, overtime (under certain conditions), etc., it is just as true that there are frequent claims for allowances, on the part of the customer, that are just and should be met in a businesslike way. Diplomacy is the greatest help in settling claims for allowances, and the printer who must handle these claims should take as his example the men in the complaint departments of big corporations, such as gas and electric companies, telephone companies and other public-service corporations, who deal with thousands of customers every month. I know a man in charge of such work for a gas and electric company whose daily work is to meet complaining customers and send them away satisfied and with a "good taste in their mouths." While his forehead is wrinkled and his nails bitten to the quick from the nervous tension of his work, his manner is always suave, and he wins his points by not appearing to combat the customer.

The right way to meet the man who thinks he has strong grounds for a complaint over his printing or the price charged for it is to appear to agree with him from the start, and to assure him at once that if the house has been at fault in any particular the matter will be made right to his entire satisfaction. He should be made to feel that his patronage is highly regarded, and that he is not even suspected of making a claim that is not just. The man with a "kick" expects to have to fight for what he considers his rights, and if he meets

no opposition to his demands or bluster he soon loses much of his indignation or combativeness and can be dealt with on a reasonable basis.

The customer who has just grounds for complaint, either regarding the price of the job, the quality of the work, or the time of delivery, should receive prompt and equitable consideration. It makes little difference to him how much the house may have made or lost on his work, and he usually knows but little of the details entering into the production of his printing. His side of the question is based on the price quoted him and on the statements that may have been made to him as to the kind of job that would be delivered and the time when he would get it. If the printer has failed to live up to any of these particulars, as he sees them, he believes he has been mistreated, and he wants satisfaction. It is usually a mistake to try to explain that, for some unforeseen reason, the job cost more than was expected and was produced at a loss instead of a profit. The better way is to explain only what the charges for extras really are, in a way that the layman will understand; and, in the case of claims for an allowance, to adjust the matter by arbitration. If the printer shows an immediate disposition to meet the customer halfway in his demands, the claim can often be reduced to fifty per cent of the original demand.

Claims for shortage should be looked into closely because there are so many chances for the patron to

claim a shortage when none exists excepting in his imagination. Records of the various departments and the delivery department should be accurate enough to satisfy most persons of the quantity of any job delivered, and the assistance of the customer should be asked in locating the shortage, if any exists. He should be impressed with the fact that no responsible printing house intentionally gives a short count, and it is best to assure the complainant, from the start, that if there has been a short delivery it will be made good, at no expense to him. An exception might be noted here, referring to the custom of some plants that print on their quotation blanks and letterheads the notice that a variation of five to ten per cent more or less of any job shall be considered as good delivery. But even with this precaution, it is necessary to handle claims for shortage in a way that impresses the buyer as being liberal.

Delayed deliveries are so common in the printing trade that the handling of complaints on this account is a serious problem in many plants. The first step toward a solution of this difficulty is to reduce the delays to the minimum. This may be done by keeping a closer check on work in the shop. A date book, in which every promise of delivery is entered when the job is taken, will help. The work in each department can be checked up with these promises every morning and many delays prevented in this way. When a job cannot be completed as promised, the best way to handle the "kick"

which is usually forthcoming is to forestall the customer by explaining to him that his work cannot be delivered exactly when promised for reasons that should be made as clear to him as possible. A new promise should then be made and lived up to. He can thus be made to feel that his work is not forgotten or held up to give precedence to some other customer.

Claims are sometimes made for a forfeiture on account of delay in delivery. The customer claims that he or his business has been damaged because the work was not delivered when promised, and he wants cash damages. Such claims require the most careful adjustment. If there has been a written agreement to deliver the work on a certain date and the customer has not contributed to the delay, his claim should be allowed, in full and without question. Such cases are rare, however, and where there is no agreement in writing to pay a forfeit in case of delay, the claim is a matter of equity, and should be settled by presenting the printer's side honestly but firmly, and then offering to compromise if the customer still claims that he must be paid for the delay and if his claim seems a just one.

The customers of a plant are among its most valuable assets, and should be held even if unjust allowances must sometimes be made. The printer should value his own self-respect at least as highly as he does the regard and respect of his customers; but it does not pay to appear too arbitrary, and the successful

printer must often swallow his pride, submit to distasteful allusions, and even at times make credit allowances that he knows are not just, in order to hold the business of an otherwise desirable customer. Every business man is to this extent a slave to his patrons, and the most successful printers are those who are most ready to adjust any grievances of customers and so hold their trade in the face of competition.

Up to a certain limit the printer can afford to let his customers say almost anything to him. Human nature is prone to juggle with truth and justice when dealing with the printer, and these shortcomings are sometimes overlooked in the interest of profits. People do not like to be told that their claims are false, even if they know it themselves; and usually nothing can be gained by antagonizing a customer in this manner. The most serious difficulties have been smoothed over and former pleasant business relations resumed by diplomacy, and the printer who is always ready to arouse the ire of his customers will soon find himself without patrons.

It is good judgment to remember always that the customer is, in a certain sense, the boss, and his wishes and peculiarities and views must be respected. The printer whose feelings are too easily offended is in the wrong business. Petty annoyances should be overlooked and overshadowed by the interesting phases of a business so closely in touch with progress and achievement in every other line of trade.

While the printing salesman should present a conciliatory attitude toward the customer, he should nevertheless remember that he is the representative of his house, and that a certain amount of firmness is required and will usually be accepted by the customer as no more than reasonable.

The salesman can largely eliminate disputes by keeping the customer in close touch with the progress of his work and by agreements in advance in regard to matters over which there might be a difference of opinion when bills become due. Such agreements, when made verbally, should be immediately reduced to writing. The salesman who comes to a conclusion with a customer in the customer's office, then goes to his own office and verifies it with a letter giving his understanding of the situation, which the customer will receive while it is fresh in his mind, will save his house a vast deal of troublesome negotiations over the adjustment of matters in dispute.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Selling Problems of the Smaller Shop

THE proprietor of the small printing plant is usually inclined to believe that he has more troubles and more difficult problems to solve than the manager of the large plant. He thinks that if he only had an equipment four or five times as large and a proportionately larger number of employees, his path through the business world would be smoother, with larger profits and few of the annoyances that he now experiences.

Investigation shows that this is hardly the correct view of the two conditions, although there are certainly many difficulties that seem to press particularly hard upon the man with a small shop, small business and small capital.

On the other side of the argument, the small printer should be able to keep in closer touch with his business than the proprietor who must delegate important responsibility to assistants who are not always competent or reliable.

The foreman of a small plant, in speaking of the condition of business in his shop, remarked to me: "We have either got too much work or not enough in our shop all the time." This remark is applicable to the entire printing trade, but the small shop suffers more

than the large one from the variation in the volume of business. Little can be done to obviate this fluctuation in orders, but the small-shop printer can do many things to meet the changing conditions of the volume of trade. It is the aim of nearly every printer to keep the presses moving, to keep all the equipment busy all the time, and this operates to prevent having something in the way of reserve equipment, to take care of the unexpected rush job when it comes in. The same assertion holds true regarding workmen. In this line, however, the printer can keep so closely in touch with the labor situation that, when he needs extra men, he knows where to get them and also something of their capabilities. The printer can also fortify himself to a wonderful degree against a flood of orders by keeping his promises of delivery. If every job is delivered on time, as promised, it will be much easier to take care of new work without delaying it on account of unfinished jobs that should have been completed.

The cost system is one of the difficulties that bother most proprietors of small shops, whether they consider it under that name or not. In spite of the agitation of printers' organizations, local and national; in spite of the work of the International Cost Congress, organized to promote a better knowledge of costs; and in spite of the efforts of several accounting firms making a specialty of printers' costs, it remains a fact that a great majority of small printing plants have no accurate

method of determining their costs. And to the heads of these concerns it is a problem to sell the product at prices that will show a profit at the end of the year.

The fallacy that the small shop can do printing much cheaper than the large plant had its origin with these small printers who had no cost-finding system. This belief was exploded long since, but many small printers have not heard the explosion. They continue to operate their shops in the mistaken belief that because they do their own soliciting, their own bookkeeping and collecting, their own proofreading, and perhaps their own presswork, their costs are about half what a plant, with a standard cost-finding system, in the city, would charge for the same work.

While the better way of ascertaining the working costs in any plant is by applying a good cost system to the work and learning the facts from the recapitulations, if a printer is too careless or lazy or unenterprising to install a system and keep it in operation, he can learn something from study of the costs of other printing offices. Overhead expense is an item that the small printer cannot side-step, and if he will apply the tests he will find that his seemingly small rent, and the few dollars he pays each month for power and insurance and taxes and other fixed charges, amount to a larger percentage of his gross sales than these same items do in a large plant. They must be covered in the gross receipts of the business, and each job must pay

its just ratio of overhead expenses, if the actual profit is to approximate the theoretical profit of the estimate.

One of the chief difficulties of the small plant is the proprietor's salary. It is troublesome because it is hard to get. Often the proprietor does not try to get it, because the task seems almost impossible. But if there is one single item that should be taken care of, and that first of all, it is the salary of the man at the head of the business. If the responsibility of conducting a small printing business is not worth a regular salary, there is something about the work different from any other occupation. I have always contended that the printer who could not and did not meet his pay roll promptly every week should close the doors and admit himself a complete business failure. But there are many men who are scrupulously punctual in filling the pay envelopes of every employee except themselves. Their excuse usually is that they get their pay from the profits of the business. But the printing business should pay profits on the investment and on the work of the employees and the operation of the machinery. Theoretically there should be a profit due the plant in the form of a salary to the manager or proprietor.

The problem should be met face to face by putting the proprietor's name on the pay roll at a weekly salary commensurate with his ability as a manager, and he should get his weekly stipend as regularly as any employee. A very small adjustment of prices will cover

the item. I have seen the suggestion to printers to add a little to their prices for a specified time and thus raise the amount of money necessary to take them to some printers' convention or cost congress; and if this is a practical suggestion, and I believe it is, it is entirely feasible to get enough more for the work done each week to pay the head of the business a salary fully equivalent to what he might receive for an equal amount of work and responsibility in any other trade.

Many small printers find it hard to compete with larger plants, but if the large shop has advantages to offer in soliciting business, the small shop also has inducements which can be made very real and important. The public has the impression that the large shop cannot give the personal attention to its work that the small one can; and it is to some extent correct in this view. It only remains for the printer to offer his personal supervision and services as the feature of his business. Many buyers like to patronize the small shop, where they can watch their work grow into a realistic materiality, the product of ideas which they consider original or unsurpassed for their purpose. They like to talk to the "boss" and to have him bring them their proofs. If the boss is also the compositor or pressman, they are even better pleased, provided the quality of the finished job measures up to their idea of what it should be.

Many small shops owe their success and growth to

the reputation of the proprietor as an artistic printer, and many a printshop owner has continued to make capital out of his ability as a printer long after the business has outgrown the stage when the product of the shop was largely the work of one man.

The small shop need not cut prices to get business. If the customer can be persuaded that the quality of the work and service is equal, if not superior, to that of the larger competing house, he usually cares little for the size of the enterprise and will consider quotations on an equal basis. If the personal-service idea can be applied to the customer's own work in a way to show him that there is a real advantage to him in this service, the small shop may even be favored with the orders.

Another difficulty of the small-shop proprietor is his credit. He often has not sufficient capital to carry on his business, and he falls into the habit of not paying his paper bills promptly, or he frequently asks customers to advance money on their work to buy the paper. Sometimes the money stringency of his business makes him ignore the payment of small bills until he has an army of bill collectors calling on him more numerous than the aggregate of his customers. Nothing will ruin a man's credit quicker, perhaps, than letting a lot of small bills run until they are long past due. Instead of one man doubting his credit, the printer then has a large number who, from their own personal experience, know that he does not pay his bills when due.

Even the smallest business should be built on the foundation of sound credit, and this can be done when it is considered that character, attention to business, enterprise and aggressiveness are all factors in extending credit or in making a loan to a business man. His capital may be considered, but it is his prospects that the banker most considers.

It injures a printer's business standing to ask a customer to advance money with which to buy paper, or to ask him to pay a part of his bill before the goods are delivered on the excuse that the money is needed for the pay roll. The better plan is to borrow the money from the bank where the printer carries his account, and if the situation is explained this arrangement can usually be made.

I know of nothing more pitiful in the printing trade than the spectacle of a concern that has no established credit and is consequently obliged to pay cash for every order of paper or other supplies. I was once closely in touch with the affairs of a printing house that had previously gone through bankruptcy, and, while the failure had occurred several years before and the firm was apparently sound at the time of which I write, the leading supply houses refused to sell goods except on a C. O. D. basis. The inconvenience and hardship of having to pay cash for everything bought were almost enough to cause another failure, but credit arrangements were finally made with other supply houses to extend credit for thirty or sixty days.

While a line of credit is essential in the carrying on of a printing business successfully, it is almost equally important to have sufficient capital to discount many of the bills before the discount date elapses. Shrewd buying and the discounting of bills may well be called the printer's first profits, and in taking advantage of discounts for cash lies an opportunity for gain that resembles the banking business and is absolutely safe. It is perhaps the one department in the production of printing where the cost system is not essential.

The small shop should not attempt to solicit orders too large to handle, but soliciting should be confined to work that can be handled advantageously, expeditiously, and without sending much of it out to be done. Extra-large jobs should be avoided because they disturb all the regular arrangements for handling work. A hundred small jobs are better for the small shop than one large one. Besides the advantages in handling the work, the hundred small jobs mean a hundred customers, and each of these patrons may have another job tomorrow, while the one large job may come from a source not usually prolific of printing orders.

There have been numerous instances in the trade where a small shop has grown unduly ambitious and by extra effort has secured an order many times too large for its equipment, with the result that the big order, which it was mistakenly thought would make the success and reputation of the shop, was the means of

forcing it to the verge of bankruptcy. There is a middle ground between ambition and satisfied contentment which is the only safe position for the proprietor of the small shop to occupy. He should be enterprising enough to want to grow and aggressive enough to work to that end, but he should be patiently satisfied to grow slowly, so that his equipment, his floor space and his available capital can keep up with an increasing flow of orders.

Notwithstanding all the peculiar difficulties and problems of the small shop, the lot of the owner of such a one is not so hard as he sometimes imagines, and oftentimes, in moments of worry and nervous tension incident to handling orders amounting to thousands of dollars for a big city plant, I have thought that I would gladly exchange places with the printer in a small town or the publisher of a country newspaper. There is a charm to the work, and it is free from much of the brain-racking toil of the big city. The small-town printer is an important personage in his field, while the printer in the city is almost a nonentity except to a limited circle of business acquaintances.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Why Printers Fail in Business

WHILE my friends all call me an optimist, I lose some of my optimism when I write on a subject like "Why Printers Fail in Business."

There is so much poor management, poor judgment, shown in the printing trade as it is conducted today, even in the face of the vast amount of educational work that has been done by the various printers' organizations, that the subject must take on something of a gloomy aspect.

A story of failure is not pleasant, but it is none the less important ; and a discussion of some of the reasons why printers fail in business may be helpful to those printers who have not failed, but who will perhaps learn from the lesson.

Failure in the printing trade is a much larger subject than the stereotyped record of the bankruptcy court, although that is the ultimate end of many a business that failed, in the larger sense, before the creditors began to close in on it. If a business is not at least moderately successful it is a failure, and in the printing industry every business seems to be either advancing or going back. If the latter, it takes strenuous methods to stop the retrograde movement, turn about and get started forward.

There are perhaps thirty thousand printing houses in the United States, and it has been stated that not more than five per cent, or at the most ten per cent of them, are operating at a substantial profit. The rest are failures, in some degree. There are somewhere between twenty-five hundred and five thousand really successful printing firms. If you doubt the truth of these figures, go over the situation of your own city or town, in your mind. You may not have access to the books of your competitors, but you can judge by their business standing, the way in which the proprietors' families live, and the kind of competition that you meet, whether your local rivals are successful business men or comparative failures. In classifying the representatives of the trade, don't overlook your own business. Your own measure of success or failure may be very apparent, but if you doubt your exact position, you can test out your business by the suggestions contained in these paragraphs and perhaps profit thereby.

The banker knows a great deal about the business ability and financial standing of the printers in his territory. The poor standing of printers at the banks is almost proverbial. It is stated that only one-third of the American printers have a good line of credit at their local banks. Education along cost-finding methods has done wonders, however, and most of the improvement in business and financial standing must come along the lines of a better knowledge of costs.

The immediate causes of failure in the printing trade are legion, but back of them all are three underlying reasons to which the condition of nearly every bankrupt printer can be traced. They are low prices, poor management, and lack of knowledge and experience.

Low prices are placed first because this is the most important cause of failure. In the face of inexperience, ignorance of costs and poor management, a business might possibly make money, I suppose, if the prices were high enough; but when prices are cut to cost or lower, the business cannot succeed.

One of the prime reasons why prices charged for printing are too low is because the selling expense is overlooked. There is too much difference between the theoretical profit, as shown by the estimate sheet, and the actual profit, as shown by the bank balance. Printers often add fifteen to twenty-five per cent to their estimated costs of production and think that is enough. In other manufacturing lines quite different customs prevail. The selling price is often double or treble the cost of production. Some well-known goods cost only a fourth or a fifth of the selling price to manufacture, yet the net profits of these manufacturers are not more than five, ten or fifteen per cent. The difference is consumed in advertising and selling expense, an item that is frequently ignored in quoting on printing. In the mail-order business it is quite generally understood that the selling price should be two hundred to three

hundred per cent of the original cost of the article sold. This statement may not apply to the great mail-order houses that sell everything, and whose volume of business reaches into the millions each year; but, applied to mail-order specialties, the statement is accurate enough to point the comparison with the way printing is generally sold.

The expense of selling is a real expense which should be charged to the business of the house, and the selling department should be treated much like any other department of the factory in carrying on a cost system. To the selling department should be charged such items as salaries and commissions paid to salesmen, the salaries of estimators, all advertising expenditures, donations to charity, discounts and allowances made for most purposes, postage, and most of the expense of correspondence. The total of these items in a year will amount in most plants to five to fifteen per cent of the total sales, and will be an amount that must be considered in quoting prices or else many jobs, taken on a close margin, will be done at a loss.

Poor management is a frequent cause of failure, and under this heading should be included such policies as can be charged to poor judgment, a faulty cost system or the lack of one, insufficient or excessive equipment, and careless methods generally in extending credit, handling orders and making collections.

From the standpoint of the workman, who gets an

occasional glimpse of the prices charged for the various departments' work, there appears to be a large and easy profit in the business, and it needs little urging for him to go in for himself. An experience in the business office of a printing house seems to be quite as essential to a man entering the printing business as a knowledge of the work of the trade is desirable. A knowledge of both ends, the producing and the selling, is about equally important, and the man who engages in the business, deficient in either department of knowledge, is under a serious handicap. He may win in the end, but he will pay dearly for his inexperience. An accurate and definite knowledge of a good cost-finding system is one of the first things the master printer should possess, and he should learn this lesson thoroughly, backward and forward.

It is right that printing organizations should ask the assistance of the printers' supply houses in their efforts to put the business upon a better foundation, with definite standards and more general customs, and it is gratifying to note the favorable response on the part of the supply houses.

In the light of competition, it is also to the interest of every master printer not only to put his own affairs upon a businesslike basis, but also to assist others, even his keenest competitors, to an accurate knowledge of costs and selling methods. Competing prices of two houses, similarly equipped, should not vary greatly,

and with two bids nearly equal, the job naturally goes to the firm offering the better service; or the placing of the order may depend upon the personality of the manager or salesman, a much better condition than a consideration of price alone.

Poor bookkeeping is responsible for many failures, not in the actual charging of the orders to the accounts of the customers, but in the keeping of cost records, the handling of all the details of expense, and accounts of charges for extras, overtime, alterations, etc. There are many opportunities for revenue to a plant by making plain and easily understood charges for extra attention or work in connection with orders. In the lithographing industry it is customary to advise patrons that a variation of five to ten per cent from the quantity of any large order will be considered as good delivery, the variation to be taken care of by a proportionate addition to or deduction from the price quoted. The firm that does this will never go into bankruptcy as a result of failure to make charges for all work performed, because it will be equally careful in all its accounting to make sure that every item of service, work or goods is billed out to its customers.

There are more failures in the printing trade than appear in the bankruptcy courts. Many a change of firm is, in effect, a failure, being a tacit acknowledgment that the former manager or owner is unable to continue the business. It is usually the unprofitable

business that is sold, not the growing, successful concern. And there are more plants on the down grade or on the verge of failure than might be generally supposed.

If you want to find out who are the unsuccessful printers in any city, advertise in the want-advertisement section of the Sunday newspaper that you wish to buy a printing plant and see how many answers you get. A friend of mine wanted to buy a plant to do some specialty printing in a Western city and advertised that he wished to purchase a shop for cash. From the replies he received he judged that nearly every shop in the town was for sale, with numerous ones in adjoining territory. From the many plants on the market he was able to select the one he wanted, and bought it at a low price; but there were many other apparent bargains offered him by owners who were most anxious to sell.

This is a deplorable condition, although a rather common one in the large cities. There are hundreds of printing plants for sale by men who have found that they cannot operate them at a profit. They want to get rid of their property for the same reason that they would want to sell a house that had outlived its usefulness to them, or a broken-down horse that could no longer work. Often the opportunities for success lie close at hand, but they cannot avail themselves of them.

Business training and education are needed to lower the percentage of failures in the business world, and

in the printing trade this training must be both general and specific, and the education a practical one. Better salesmen and better managers are needed—not only master printers, but masters of salesmanship and management as applied to the manufacturing trade of printing.

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